

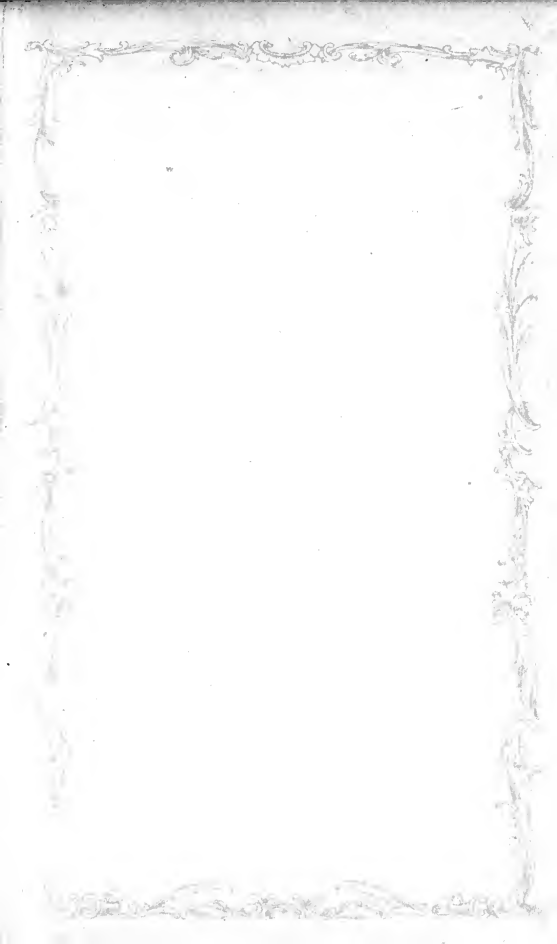
Stories of the South

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STORIES OF
THE SOUTH



STORIES FROM SCRIBNER



STORIES OF
THE SOUTH



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STORIES OF THE SOUTH



NO HAID PAWN

BY THOMAS NELSON PAGE

HOW THE DERBY WAS WON

BY HARRISON ROBERTSON

AUNT FOUNTAIN'S PRISONER

BY JOEL CHANDLER HARRIS

TIRAR Y SOULT

BY REBECCA HARDING DAVIS

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“NO HAID PAWN”

BY THOMAS NELSON PAGE





IT was a ghostly place in broad daylight, if the glimmer that stole through the dense forest that surrounded it when the sun was directly overhead deserved this delusive name. At any other time it was—why; we were afraid even to talk about it! and as to venturing within its gloomy borders, it was currently believed among us that to do so was to bring upon the intruder certain death. I knew every foot of ground, wet and dry, within five miles of my father's house except this plantation,

for I had hunted by day and night every field, forest, and marsh within that radius ; but the swamp and "ma'shes" that surrounded this place I had never invaded. The boldest hunter on the plantation would call off his dogs and go home if they struck a trail that crossed the sobby boundary line of "No Haid Pawn."

"Jack 'my lanterns" and "evil sperits" only infested those woods, and the earnest advice of those whom we children acknowledged to know most about them, was, "Don't you never go nigh dyah, honey ; hit's de evil-speritest place in dis wull."

Had not Big William, and Cephas, and Poliam followed their dogs in there one night, and cut down a tree in which they had with their own eyes seen the coon, and lo ! when it fell "de warn no mo' coon dyah 'n a dog !" and the next tree they had "treed in" not only had no coon in it, but when it was cut down it had

fallen on Poliam and broken his leg. So the very woods were haunted. From this time they were abandoned to the "jack 'my lanterns " and ghosts, and another shadow was added to "*No Haid Pawn.*"

The place was as much cut off from the rest of the country as if a sea had divided it. The river with marshy banks swept around it in a wide horseshoe on three sides, and when the hammocks dammed it up it washed its way straight across and scoured out a new bed for itself, completely isolating the whole plantation.

The owners of it, if there were any, which was doubtful, were aliens, and in my time it had not been occupied for forty years. The negroes declared that it was " gi'n up " to the " ha'nts an' evil sperits," and that no living being could live there. It had grown up in forest and had wholly reverted to original marsh. The road that once ran through the swamp had long since been choked up, and the trees were

as thick, and the jungle as dense now in its track, as in the adjacent "ma'sh." Only one path remained. That, it was currently believed by the entire portion of the population who speculated on the subject, was kept open by the evil spirits. Certain it was that no human foot ever trod the narrow, tortuous line that ran through the brakes as deviously as the noiseless stagnant ditches that curved through the jungle, where the musk-rat played and the moccasin slept unmolested. Yet there it lay, plain and well-defined, month after month, and year after year, as No Haid Pawn itself stood, amid its surrounding swamps, all undisturbed and unchanging.

Even the runaway slaves who occasionally left their homes and took to the swamps and woods, impelled by the cruelty of their overseers, or by a desire for a vain counterfeit of freedom, never tried this swamp, but preferred to be

caught and returned home to invading its awful shades.

We were brought up to believe in ghosts. Our fathers and mothers laughed at us, and endeavored to reason us out of such a superstition—the fathers with much of ridicule and satire, the mothers giving sweet religious reasons for their argument—but what could they avail against the actual testimony and the blood-curdling experiences of a score of witnesses who recounted their personal observations with a degree of thrilling realism and a vividness that overbore any arguments our childish reason could grasp! The old mammies and uncles who were our companions and comrades believed in the existence of evil spirits as truly as in the existence of hell or heaven, as to which at that time no question had ever been raised, so far as was known, in that slumberous world. [The Bible was the standard, and all disputes were resolved into

an appeal to that authority : the single question as to any point being simply, "Is it in the Bible ? "] Had not Lazarus and Mam' Celia, and William, and Twis'-foot-Bob, and Aunt Sukie Brown and others

seen with their own eyes the evil spirits, again and again, in the bodily shape of cats, headless dogs, white cows, and other less palpable forms ! And was



not their experience, who lived in remote cabins, or wandered night after night through the loneliest woods, stronger evidence than the cold reasoning of those who hardly ever stirred abroad except in daylight ! It certainly was more conclusive to us ; for no one could have listened to those narrators without being impressed with the fact that they were recounting what they had actually seen with their bodily eyes. The result of it all was, so

far as we were concerned, the triumph of faith over reason, and the fixed belief on our part, in the actual visible existence of the departed, in the sinister form of apparition known as "evil sperits." Every graveyard was tenanted by them; every old house, and every peculiarly desolate spot was known to be their rendezvous; but all spots and places sank into insignificance compared with No Haid Pawn.

The very name was uncanny. Originally it had designated a long, stagnant pool of water lying in the centre of the tract, which marked the spot from which the soil had been dug to raise the elevation on which to set the house. More modernly the place, by reason of the filling up of ditches and the sinking of dykes, had become again simple swamp and jungle, or, to use the local expression, "had turned to ma'sh," and the name applied to the whole plantation.

The origin of the name—the pond had

no source ; but there was a better explanation than that. Anyhow, the very name inspired dread, and the place was our terror.

The house had been built many generations before by a stranger in this section, and the owners never made it their permanent home. 'Thus, no ties either of blood or friendship were formed with their neighbors, who were certainly open-hearted and open-doored enough to overcome anything but the most persistent unneighborliness. Why this spot was selected for a mansion was always a mystery, unless it was that the newcomer desired to isolate himself completely. Instead of following the custom of those who were native and to the manor born, who always chose some eminence for their seats, he had selected for his a spot in the middle of the wide flat which lay in the horseshoe of the river. The low ground, probably owing to the abundance of land in that country, had

never been " taken up, " and up to the time of his occupation was in a condition of primeval swamp. He had to begin by making an artificial mound for his mansion. Even then, it was said, he dug so deep that he laid the corner-stone in water. The foundation was of stone, which was brought from a distance. Fabulous stories were told of it. The negroes declared that under the old house were solid rock chambers, which had been built for dungeons, and had served for purposes which were none the less awful because they were vague and indefinite. The huge structure itself was of wood, and was alleged to contain many mysterious rooms and underground passages. One of the latter was said to connect with the No Haid Pawn itself, whose dark waters, according to the negroes' traditions, were some day, by some process not wholly consistent with the laws of physics, to overwhelm the fated pile. An evil destiny had seemed to

overshadow the place from the very beginning. One of the negro builders had been caught and decapitated between two of the immense foundation stones. The tradition was handed down that he was sacrificed in some awful and occult rite connected with the laying of the corner-stone. The scaffolding had given way and had precipitated several men to the ground, most of whom had been fatally hurt. This also was alleged to be by hideous design. Then the plantation, in the process of being reclaimed, had proved unhealthy beyond all experience, and the negroes employed in the work of dyking and reclaiming the great swamp had sickened and died by dozens. The extension of the dangerous fever to the adjoining plantations had left a reputation for typhus malaria from which the whole section suffered for a time. But this did not prevent the colored population from recounting year after year the horrors of the pestilence of No Haid Pawn,

as a peculiar visitation, nor from relating with blood-curdling details the burial by scores, in a thicket just beside the pond, of the stricken " befo' dee *daid*, honey, befo' dee *daid* ! " The bodies, it was said, used to float about in the guts of the swamp and on the haunted pond ; and at night they might be seen, if anyone were so hardy as to venture there, rowing about in their coffins as if they were boats.

Thus the place from the beginning had an evil name, and when, year after year, the river rose and washed the levees away, or the musk-rats burrowed through and let the water in, and the strange masters cursed not only the elements but Heaven itself, the continued mortality of their negroes was not wholly unexpected, nor unaccounted for by certain classes of their neighbors.

At length the property had fallen to one more gloomy, more strange, and more sinister than any who had gone before

him—a man whose personal characteristics and habits were unique in that country. He was of gigantic stature and superhuman strength, and possessed appetites and vices in proportion to his size. He could fell an ox with a blow of his fist, or in a fit of anger could tear down the branch of a tree, or bend a bar of iron like a reed. He, either from caprice or ignorance, spoke only a *patois* not unlike the Creole French of the Louisiana parishes. But he was a West Indian. His brutal temper and habits cut him off from even the small measure of intercourse which had existed between his predecessors and their neighbors, and he lived at No Haid Pawn completely isolated. All the stories and traditions of the place at once centred on him, and fabulous tales were told of his prowess and of his life. It was said, among other things, that he preserved his wonderful strength by drinking human blood, a tale which in a certain sense I

have never seen reason to question. Making all allowances, his life was a blot upon civilization. At length it culminated. A



brutal temper, inflamed by unbridled passions, after a long period of license and debauchery, came to a climax in a final orgy of ferocity and fury, in which he was

guilty of an act whose fiendishness surpassed belief, and he was brought to judgment.

In modern times the very inhumanity of the crime would probably have proved his security, and as he had destroyed his own property while he was perpetrating a crime of appalling and unparalleled horror, he might have found a defence in that standing refuge of extraordinary scoundrelism—insanity. This defence, indeed, was put in, and was pressed with much ability by his counsel, one of whom was my father, who had just then been admitted to the bar ; but fortunately for the cause of justice, neither courts nor juries were then so sentimental as they have become of late years, and the last occupant of No Haid Pawn paid under the law the full penalty of his hideous crime. It was one of the curious incidents of the trial that his negroes all lamented his death and declared that he was a good master

when he was not drunk. He was hanged just at the rear of his own house, within sight of the spot where his awful crime was committed.

At his execution, which according to the custom of the country was public, a horrible coincidence occurred which furnished the text of many a sermon on retributive justice among the negroes.

The body was interred near the pond close by the thicket where the negroes were buried; but the negroes declared that it preferred one of the stone chambers under the mansion, where it made its home, and that it might be seen at any time of the day or night stalking headless about the place. They used to dwell with peculiar zest on the most agonizing details of this wretch's dreadful crime, the whole culminating in the final act of maniacal fury when the gigantic monster dragged the hacked and headless corpse of his victim up the staircase and stood it

up before the open window in his hall, in full view of the terrified slaves. After these narrations, the continued reappearance of the murderer and his headless victim was as natural to us as it was to the negroes themselves; and, as night after night we would hurry up to the great house through the darkness, we were ever on the watch lest he should appear to our frightened vision from the shades of the shrubby-filled yard.

Thus it was that of all ghostly places No Haid Pawn had the distinction of being invested, to us, with unparalleled horror, and thus to us, no less than because the dykes had given way and the overflowed flats had turned again to swamp and jungle, it was explicable that No Haid Pawn was abandoned, and was now untrodden by any foot but that of its ghostly tenants.

The time of my story was 185-. The spring previous continuous rains had kept

the river full, and had flooded the low-grounds, and this had been followed by an exceptionally dense growth in the summer. Then, public feeling was greatly excited at the time of which I write, over the discovery in the neighborhood of several emissaries of the underground railway, or—as they were universally considered in that country—of the devil. They had been run off or had disappeared suddenly, but had left behind them some little excitement on the part of the slaves, and a great deal on the part of their masters, and more than the usual number of negroes had run away. All, however, had been caught, or had returned home after a sufficient interval of freedom, except one who had escaped permanently, and who was supposed to have accompanied his instigators on their flight.

This man was a well-known character. He belonged to one of our neighbors, and had been bought and brought there from

an estate on the Lower Mississippi. He was the most brutal negro I ever knew. He was of a type rarely found among our negroes, who, judging from their physiognomy and general characteristics, came principally from the coast

of Africa. They are of moderate stature, with dull but amiable faces.

This man, however, was of immense size, and he possessed the features and expres-

sion of a Congo desperado. In character also he differed essentially from all the other slaves in our country. He was alike without their amiability and their docility, and was as fearless as he was brutal. He was the only negro I ever knew who was without either superstition or reverence. Indeed, he differed so widely from the rest of the slaves in that section that there existed some



feeling against him almost akin to a race feeling. At the same time that he exercised considerable influence over them they were dreadfully afraid of him, and were always in terror that he would trick them, to which awful power he laid well-known claim. His curses in his strange dialect used to terrify them beyond measure, and they would do anything to conciliate him. He had been a continual source of trouble, and an object of suspicion in the neighborhood from the time of his first appearance; and more than one hog that the negroes declared had wandered into the marshes of No Haid Pawn, and had "cut his thote jes' swinin' aroun' an' aroun' in de ma'sh," had been suspected of finding its way to this man's cabin. His master had often been urged to get rid of him, but he was kept, I think, probably because he was valuable on the plantation. He was a fine butcher, a good work-hand, and a first-

class boatman. Moreover, ours was a conservative population, in which every man minded his own business and let his neighbor's alone.

At the time of the visits of those secret agents to which I have referred, this negro was discovered to be the leader in the secret meetings held under their auspices, and he would doubtless have been taken up and shipped off at once ; but when the intruders fled, as I have related, their convert disappeared also. It was a subject of general felicitation in the neighborhood that he was gotten rid of, and his master, instead of being commiserated on the loss of his slave, was congratulated that he had not cut his throat.

No idea can be given at this date of the excitement occasioned in a quiet neighborhood in old times by the discovery of the mere presence of such characters as Abolitionists.* It was as if the foundations of the whole social fabric were under-

mined. It was the sudden darkening of a shadow that always hung in the horizon. The slaves were in a large majority, and had they risen, though the final issue could not be doubted, the lives of every white on the plantations must have paid the forfeit. Whatever the right and wrong of slavery might have been, its existence demanded that no outside interference with it should be tolerated. So much was certain ; self-preservation required this.

I was, at the time of which I speak, a well-grown lad, and had been for two sessions to a boarding-school, where I had gotten rid of some portion—I will not say of all—of the superstition of my boyhood. The spirit of adventure was beginning to exert itself in me, and I had begun to feel a sense of enjoyment in overcoming the fears which once mastered me, though, I must confess, I had not entirely shaken off my belief in the existence of ghosts—

that is, I did not believe in them at all in the daytime, but when night came I was not so certain about it.

Duck-hunting was my favorite sport, and the marshes on the river were fine ground for them usually, but this season the weather had been so singularly warm that the sport had been poor, and though I had scoured every canal in the marsh, and every bend in the river as far as No Haid Pawn Hammock, as the stretch of drifted timber and treacherous marsh was called that marked the boundary-line of that plantation, I had had bad luck. Beyond that point I had never penetrated, partly, no doubt, because of the training of my earlier years, and partly because the marsh on either side of the hammock would have mired a cat. Often, as I watched with envious eyes the wild duck rise up over the dense trees that surrounded the place and cut straight for the deserted marshes in the horseshoe, I had

had a longing to invade the mysterious domain, and crawl to the edge of No Haid Pawn and get a shot at the fowl that floated on its black surface ; but something had always deterred me, and the long reaches of No Haid Pawn were left to the wild-fowl and the ghostly rowers. Finally, however, after a spell whose high temperature was rather suited to August than April, in desperation at my ill-luck I determined to gratify my curiosity and try No Haid Pawn. So one afternoon, without telling anyone of my intention, I crossed the mysterious boundary and struck through the swamp for the unknown land.

The marsh was far worse than I had anticipated, and no one but a duck-hunter as experienced and zealous as myself, and as indifferent to ditches, briers, mire, and all that make a swamp, could have penetrated it at all. Even I could never have gotten on if I had' not followed the

one path that led into the marsh, the reputed "parf" of the evil spirits, and as it was, my progress was both tedious and dangerous.

The track was a mysterious one, for though I knew it had not been trodden by a human foot in many years, yet there a veritable "parf" it lay. In some places it was almost completely lost, and I would fear I should have to turn back, but an overhanging branch or a vine swinging from one tree to another would furnish a way to some spot where the narrow trail began again. In other spots old logs thrown across the miry canals gave me an uncomfortable feeling as I reflected what feet had last crossed on them. On both sides of this trail the marsh was either an impenetrable jungle or a mire apparently bottomless.

I shall never forget my sensations as I finally emerged from the woods into the clearing, if that desolate waste of willows,

cane, and swamp growth could be so termed. About me stretched the jungle, over which a greenish lurid atmosphere brooded, and straight ahead towered the gaunt mansion, a rambling pile of sombre white, with numberless vacant windows staring at me from the leafless trees about it. Only one other clump of trees appeared above the canes and brush, and that I knew by intuition was the graveyard.

I think I should have turned back had not shame impelled me forward.

My progress from this point was even more difficult than it had been hitherto, for the trail at the end of the wood terminated abruptly in a gut of the swamp; however, I managed to keep on by walking on hammocks, pushing through clumps of bushes, and wading as best I could. It was slow and hot work, though.

It never once struck me that it must be getting late. I had become so accustomed

to the gloom of the woods that the more open ground appeared quite light to me, and I had not paid any attention to the black cloud that had been for some time gathering overhead, or to the darkening atmosphere.

I suddenly became sensible that it was going to rain. However, I was so much engrossed in the endeavor to get on that even then I took little note of it. The nearer I came to the house the more it arrested my attention, and the more weird and uncanny it looked. Canes and bushes grew up to the very door; the window-shutters hung from the hinges; the broken windows glared like eyeless sockets; the portico had fallen away from the wall, while the wide door stood slightly ajar, giving to the place a singularly ghastly appearance somewhat akin to the color which sometimes lingers on the face of a corpse. In my progress wading through the swamp I had gone around rather to

the side of the house toward where I supposed the "pawn" itself to lie.

I was now quite near to it, and striking a little less miry ground, as I pushed my way through the bushes and canes which were higher than my head, I became aware that I was very near the thicket that marked the graveyard, just beyond which I knew the pond itself lay. I was somewhat startled, for the cloud made it quite dusky, and stepping on a long piece of rotten timber lying on the ground, I parted the bushes to look down the pond. As I did so the rattle of a chain grated on me, and glancing up through the cane before me appeared a heavy upright timber with an arm or cross-beam stretching from it, from which dangled a long chain almost rusted away. I knew by instinct that I stood under the gallows where the murderer of No Haid Pawn had expiated his dreadful crime. His corpse must have fallen just where I stood. I started back appalled.

Just then the black cloud above me was parted by a vivid flame and a peal of thunder seemed to rive the earth.

I turned in terror, but before I had gone fifty yards the storm was upon me, and instinctively I made for the only refuge that was at hand. It was a dreadful alternative, but I did not hesitate. Outside I was not even sure that my life was safe. And with extraordinary swiftness I had made my way through the broken iron fence that lay rusting in the swamp, had traversed the yard, all grown up as it was to the very threshold, had ascended the sunken steps, crossed the rotted portico, and entered the open door.

A long dark hall stretched before me, extending, as well as I could judge in the gloom, entirely across the house. A number of doors, some shut, some ajar, opened on the hall on one side; and a broad dark stairway ascended on the other to the upper story. The walls were black

with mould. At the far end a large bow-window, with all the glass gone, looked out on the waste of swamp, unbroken save by the clump of trees in the graveyard, and just beside this window was a break where the dark staircase descended to the apartments below. The whole place was in a state of advanced decay ; almost the entire plastering had fallen with the damp, and the hall presented a scene of desolation that beggars description.

I was at last in the haunted house !

The rain, driven by the wind, poured in at the broken windows, in such a deluge that I was forced in self-defence to seek shelter in one of the rooms. I tried several, but the doors were swollen or fastened ; I found one, however, on the leeward side of the house, and pushing the door, which opened easily, I entered. Inside I found something like an old bed ; and the great open fireplace had evidently been used at some earlier time, for

the ashes were still banked up in the cavernous hearth, and the charred ends of the logs of wood were lying in the chimney corners. To see, still as fresh and natural as though the fire had but just died out, these remnants of domestic life that had survived all else of a similar period struck me as unspeakably ghastly. The bedstead, however, though rude was convenient as a seat, and I utilized it accordingly, propping myself up against one of the rough posts. From my position I commanded through the open door the entire length of the vacant hall, and could look straight out of the great bow-window at the head of the stairs, through which appeared against the dull sky the black mass of the graveyard trees, and a stretch of one of the canals or guts of the swamp curving around it, which gleamed white in the glare of the lightning.

I had expected that the storm would, like most thunder-storms in the latitude,

shortly exhaust itself, or, as we say, "blow over;" but I was mistaken, and as the time passed, its violence, instead of diminishing, increased. It grew darker and darker, and presently the startling truth dawned on me that the gloom which I had supposed simply the effect of the overshadowing cloud had been really nightfall. I was shut up alone in No Haid Pawn for the night !

I hastened to the door with the intention of braving the storm and getting away ; but I was almost blown off my feet. A glance without showed me that the guts with which the swamp was traversed in every direction were now full to the brim, and to attempt to find my way home in the darkness would be sheer madness ; so, after a wistful survey, I returned to my wretched perch. I thought I would try and light a fire, but to my consternation I had not a match, and I finally abandoned myself to my fate. It was a desolate, if

not despairing, feeling that I experienced. My mind was filled, not only with my own unhappiness, but with the thought of the distress my absence would occasion them at home; and for a little while I had a fleeting hope that a party would be sent out to search for me. This, however, was untenable, for they would not know where I was. The last place in which they would ever think of looking for me was No Haid Pawn, and even if they knew I was there they could no more get to me in the darkness and storm than I could escape from it.

I accordingly propped myself up on my bed and gave myself up to my reflections. I said my prayers very fervently. I thought I would try and get to sleep, but sleep was far from my eyes.

My surroundings were too vivid to my apprehension. The awful traditions of the place, do what I might to banish them, would come to mind. The original build-

ing of the house, and its blood-stained foundation stones ; the dead who had died of the pestilence that had raged afterward ; the bodies carted by scores and buried in the sobby earth of the graveyard, whose trees loomed up through the broken window ; the dreadful story of the dead paddling about the swamp in their coffins ; and, above all, the gigantic maniac whose ferocity even murder could not satiate, and who had added to murder awful mutilation ; he had dragged the mangled corpse of his victim up those very steps and flung it out of the very window which gaped just beyond me in the glare of the lightning. It all passed through my mind as I sat there in the darkness, and no effort of my will could keep my thoughts from dwelling on it. The terrific thunder, outcrashing a thousand batteries, at times engrossed my attention ; but it always reverted to that scene of horror ; and if I dozed, the slamming of the loose blinds,

or the terrific fury of the storm would suddenly startle me. Once, as the sounds subsided for a moment, or else I having become familiar with them, as I was sinking into a sleepy state, a door at the other end of the hall creaked and then slammed with violence, bringing me bolt upright on the bed, clutching my gun. I could have sworn that I heard footsteps; but the wind was blowing a hurricane, and after another period of wakefulness and dreadful recollection, nature succumbed, and I fell asleep.

I do not know that I can be said to have lost consciousness even then, for my mind was still enchained by the horrors of my situation, and went on clinging to them and dwelling upon them even in my slumber.

I was, however, certainly asleep; for the storm must have died temporarily away about this hour without my knowing it, and I subsequently heard that it did.

I must have slept several hours, for I was quite stiff from my constrained posture when I became fully aroused.

I was awakened by a very peculiar sound; it was like a distant call or halloo. Although I had been fast asleep a moment before, it startled me into a state of the highest attention. In a second I was wide awake. There was not a sound except the rumble and roll of the thunder as the storm once more began to renew itself, and in the segment of the circle that I could see along the hall through my door, and indeed out through the yawning window at the end, as far as the black clump of trees in the graveyard just at the bend of the canal, which I commanded from my seat whenever there was a flash of lightning, there was only the swaying of the bushes in the swamp and of the trees in the graveyard. Yet there I sat bolt upright on my bed, in the darkness, with every nerve strained to its utmost tension,

and that unearthly cry still sounding in my ears. I was endeavoring to reason myself into the belief that I had dreamed it, when a flash of lightning lit up the whole field of my vision as if it had been in the focus of a sun-glass, and out on the canal where it curved around the graveyard was a boat—a something—small, black, with square ends, and with a man in it, standing upright, and something lying in a lump or mass at the bow.

I knew I could not be mistaken, for the lightning by a process of its own photographs everything on the retina in minutest detail, and I had a vivid impression of everything from the foot of the bed on which I crouched to the gaunt arms of those black trees in the graveyard just over that ghostly boatman and his dreadful freight. I was wide awake. The story of the dead rowing in their coffins was verified!

I am unable to state what passed in the next few minutes.

The storm had burst again with renewed violence and was once more expending itself on the house; the thunder was again rolling overhead; the broken blinds were swinging and slamming madly; and the dreadful memories of the place were once more besetting me.

I shifted my position to relieve the cramp it had occasioned, still keeping my face toward that fatal window. As I did so I heard above, or perhaps I should say under, the storm a sound more terrible to me—the repetition of that weird halloo, this time almost under the great window. Immediately succeeding this was the sound of something scraping under the wall, and I was sensible when a door on the ground-floor was struck with a heavy thud. It was pitch-dark, but I heard the door pushed wide open, and as a string of fierce oaths, part English and part Creole-French, floated up the dark stairway, muffled as if sworn through clinched teeth,

I held my breath. I recalled the unknown tongue the ghostly murderer employed ; and I knew that the murderer of No Haid Pawn had left his grave, and that his ghost was coming up that stair. I heard his step as it fell on the first stair heavily yet almost noiselessly. It was an unearthly sound—dull, like the tread of a bared foot, accompanied by the scraping sound of a body dragging. Step by step he came up the black stairway in the pitch-darkness as steadily as if it were daytime—and he knew every step—accompanied by that sickening sound of dragging. There was a final pull up the last step, and a dull, heavy thud, as with a strange, wild laugh he flung his burden on the floor.

For a moment there was not a sound, and then the awful silence and blackness were broken by a crash of thunder that seemed to tear the foundations asunder like a mighty earthquake, and the whole



house, and the great swamp outside, were filled with a glare of vivid blinding light. Directly in front of me, clutching in his upraised hand a long, keen, glittering knife, on whose blade a ball of fire seemed to play, stood a gigantic figure in the very flame of the lightning, and stretched at his feet lay, ghastly and bloody, a black and headless trunk.

I staggered to the door and, tripping, fell prostrate over the sill.

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When we could get there nothing was left but the foundation. The haunted house when struck had literally burned to the water's edge. The changed current had washed its way close to the place, and in strange verification of the negroes' tradition, No Haid Pawn had reclaimed its own, and the spot with all its secrets lay buried under its dark waters.

HOW THE DERBY WAS WON

By HARRISON ROBERTSON

I.



IT was natural that when Gid Bronxon realized he had his way to make in the world, and determined to set about making it, he should turn to horses, even though he was well aware that horses had been the ruin of his father. Indeed, he asked himself, what else could he turn to but horses? He had a fair education, it is true, but it was a superficial and general one, and when the time came for him to apply his knowledge to the practical purpose of earning a living none of it seemed available except his knowledge of horses. None of it was

at all thorough except that. He had been an excellent first-baseman at "college," as the small, struggling school which he had attended called itself; but beyond this his collegiate achievements had not been noteworthy, and he had never been able to quite understand how he had succeeded in taking his "degree"—a mystery which was better understood, perhaps, by his "Faculty," as his "Alma Mater" was one of those institutions which are not very exacting in their requirements for graduation, the most rigid of them being that the student shall get over in some fashion a four years' course, and shall not be remiss in paying his tuition bills.

But he knew horses better than he knew baseball, and he liked them better than anything else in the world, except Jean Heath. He was born among them; he grew up among them; and that they would eventually be the death of him, old

Aunt Polly Heath (though herself the wife of that veteran horseman Uncle Lije Heath) had time and again predicted. Gid was a true son of the "Kentucky Bluegrass region," famed, wherever the horse is prized, for the speed, endurance, and beauty of its thoroughbreds ; and he was as logically a product of his environments as the superiority of the thoroughbreds themselves.

He may have inherited his fondness for horses from his father, but he had acquired his information concerning them from other sources ; for he had been quick to see that his father was one of those men, by no means rare in Kentucky, whose interest in the race-horse is far in excess of their ability to form an intelligent opinion as to his qualities, and who are almost invariably greater losers in purse than they are gainers by experience.

Such, at least, had been the case with the elder Bronxon. His farm, once a val-

uable one, had diminished as his tendency to "back his opinion" increased, until, at the time of his death, a few weeks after his son's return from school, all that was left was the house, then decidedly ramshackle, and about forty acres of land; which would also have probably slipped out of his hands if he had lived to make one or two more trips to the annual spring and fall "meetings" at Louisville and Lexington.

The Bronxon place adjoined the Heath place, which was a stock farm, though not as large nor as widely known as many similar farms in Kentucky. It belonged to "Major" Heath, who had acquired his title by common consent of his neighbors, and who devoted a deal more care to his horses than he did to his children, whom he allowed to grow up and "run wild" pretty much as they chose. It was probably due to this proximity to the Major's that Gid's father became so much inter-

ested in the thoroughbred ; and without doubt this circumstance of his residence was largely responsible for the early bent of Gid's own youthful tastes, for he and Tom Heath were inseparable playfellows as boys, and while Tom lived there was never a colt on his father's farm which did not know the twain, and which was not better known by them.

After Tom's death, however, Gid was very rarely at the Heaths'. He went off to school about that time, and during his vacations at home he seldom saw the Major or the Major's daughter, except at some chance meeting on the public roads, or on Sundays at the little neighborhood church, which Gid attended regularly all through those vacations. He sat out the long sermons with a patience that elevated him perceptibly in the good graces of the minister, and gazed at the back of Jean Heath's bonnie head with a furtive assiduity which could not have been more en-

grossing and reverential if, bearing in mind a certain illuminated text on the wall, he were trying to number and invoke a blessing upon each separate strand that coiled beneath the little bonnet in Major Heath's pew. For Jean Heath was no longer in his eyes merely Tom's little hoiden sister. She had budded into a young womanhood which awed while it charmed him, and which made her seem as far above him as he had been accustomed to hold himself above her when she *was* merely Tom's little hoiden sister. This feeling was only intensified by the fact that whenever they met now, Jean, notwithstanding his own blushing awkwardness, was just as much at ease and just as frank and friendly as she had ever been before he had begun to appreciate what a bewitching creature she was, and how superior she was in every respect to his gawky self. True, she was somewhat of a little hoiden still, but Gid Bronxon

would have been the last man to acknowledge it.

On his final return from college, however, he had outgrown, in some degree, his diffidence, although his admiration for her who had inspired it was stronger than ever. And if he was yet disinclined to seek advancement in her favor by any means more positive than he had formerly employed, he soon saw that others were more aggressive, and this spurred him, as perhaps nothing else could have done, to the necessity of making some demonstration in his own behalf. He had not intended to make any such demonstration yet—certainly not before he had at least partially repaired his fortunes, although Jean's piquancy and vivacity were evidently so attractive to others, less backward and more plausible than he, that he found himself bordering on something like desperation before he had been at home three months. And so one day

about this time, when Major Heath, who declared that he was getting too old to give his farm the attention it needed, suggested that a young fellow with as much "horse sense" as Gid ought to be his chief lieutenant, Gid replied, in the flush of the moment, that he agreed with the Major entirely on that point, and before the two parted it was settled between them that the younger man was to relieve the older one of the duties of the active management of the Heath farm.

There were more considerations than one which were instrumental in deciding Gid to enter upon this arrangement. In the first place, the salary was more than he could hope to make, with his lack of capital, on what remained to him of his father's estate. In the second place, no other occupation was so much to his liking as the breeding and care of blooded horses, and nowhere else would he have a better opportunity to follow it. In the

last place—perhaps it would be nearer the truth to have said in the first place—he was not uninfluenced by the reflection that he would be under the same roof with Jean ; that he would see her often, instead of rarely at all, as had been his self-imposed restriction for so long. It would be an injustice to him to infer that he accepted the Major's proposition with any idea of advancing himself in the graces of the Major's daughter. He had no consciously defined thought of that nature. If he had harbored such a design at that time he could easily have found occasion for attempting to further it. The truth is, that while he had determined that he would exert no effort to inspire a reciprocation of his love for Jean Heath until his worldly prospects should better warrant such presumption, he could not resist the temptation, which her father's proposition held out to him, of her presence—of hearing the cheeriness

of her voice, and looking upon the sunshine of her hair and the shadows of her eyes. It may be that he would not have resisted this temptation if any reason had occurred to him why he should resist it; but no such reason suggesting itself, he was disturbed by no doubts as to the wisdom of his decision, and it was but a short time after the Major had broached the matter to him that he was installed as the Major's vice-regent.

II.

BUT he was far from being as pleased with life at the Major's as he had thought he would be. Not that his work was any less to his taste than he had anticipated, or that he could have given any definite reason for his disappointment. But reason there was, he felt rather than knew; and, moreover, felt that it was connected in some way with Jean Heath.

He was conscious of a subtle change in her manner toward him from the first day on which he began his new duties—a change which troubled and perplexed him all the more because he could not have put it into words, and could not even be sure of its character. His impression was convincing, however, that he had incurred her displeasure somehow, and that, while she treated him with not unkindly courtesy, she did not attempt to conceal from him, but rather intended to indicate to him, her disapprobation of—what? He knew no explanation for this altered demeanor; at first he could think of none; and when, after much gloomy and perturbing speculation, he stumbled on one, he stumbled on it with the fatuity of a man in love, and of course it was a wrong one.

It was not an explanation which tended to make him less dissatisfied with himself, or to render his stay at the Major's more

like what he had foolishly expected it would be. On the contrary, it added to his discomfort and unhappiness ; for it was based on the assumption that Jean had interpreted his coming to her home as an open manifestation of a purpose to ingratiate himself with her, and that she regarded it with disapproval, if not with suspicion.

He was all the more confident that this was the true solution because it gave him unlimited ground for self-condemnation as a blundering dolt, and for riotous despondency as to his prospects of ever winning the love of the only girl in the world whose love was worth winning. This precipitation of hopelessness was hardly a radical reversal of the point of view from which he contemplated his love for Jean Heath ; for he had long had premonitions that some time it would come to this, and often, when he had tried to summon common sense to his aid in re-

solving the result of his passion, he had about convinced himself that it could come to nothing else.

His inference that she had discovered, and sought to rebuke that passion was further strengthened by her graciousness to other men who did not conceal their preferences for her, and especially to Casey Pallam, a handsome young Tennessean, who, having recently come into his fortune, was bent upon indulging in that embellishment of a modern gentleman's establishment, a racing stable. It was ostensibly to collect such a stable that he was in Kentucky, although Gid Bronxon was perfectly sure that this did not require his remaining in the Bluegrass so long, or spending so much of his time at the Major's, whose sale of thoroughbreds, as every one knew, took place annually, and in public, on a day duly advertised.

Once satisfied that his presence was distasteful to Jean Heath, there was, of

course, but one thing for Gid to do, and he was prompt in doing it. Frankly telling the Major that he wished to be released from their agreement, the latter, although not pretending to understand the motive of the request, seeing that it was preferred in all sincerity, at once assented to it; and Gid went to his room and made his preparations for leaving. These completed, he returned downstairs, intending to send back for his things; and as he stepped from the house Jean Heath was on the lawn, humming a song and trimming her rose-bushes.

"Good-by, Miss Jean," he called out, lightly, as he walked on toward the gate.

"Good-by? Why, where are you goin'?" she asked, turning to him in surprise.

"Over home," he answered, pausing and facing her. "The Major and I have agreed to quit," with a moderately successful attempt at a smile.

"You—you haven't quarrelled, have you?" with a suspicion of something in her manner that might have suggested trepidation to her only auditor if he had been in a frame of mind to entertain a distinct consciousness of anything of less significance than that he was going away, and that he was leaving all his hopes behind him.

"No; we haven't quarrelled," he replied. "Of course not. I simply asked him to release me, and he kindly did so."

"I'm glad you're goin'," suddenly turning to the rose-bush, and with one erratic clip of its main stem destroying all her work which but a moment before she had completed to her satisfaction. Then she straightened up, as if impelled by a quick after-thought, and confronted him again, flushing almost as painfully as he himself was doing. "I mean I'm glad that—that you're goin' to do somethin' else."

But whatever her meaning might have

been, Gid was incapable, just then, of construing it except literally. Her words were to him fully confirmatory of his own convictions, and they struck him with none the less force because their bluntness was not altogether uncharacteristic of the speaker.

They stung him into a desperation which broke into such expression as he would have shrunk from a minute before. "I know it!" he said. "I know you're glad; you need not take the trouble to tell me. I'm too well aware that my love for you annoys you; but I did not intend to speak to you of it or to——"

"I hope you didn't, as long as you were satisfied to—to be—my father's servant!" she interrupted, with a vehemence that to Gid was inexplicable.

It was a brutal thing to say, and he did not feel this more acutely than she, as soon as it was said; but its brutality would not have been without avail if it had dis-

closed to him, as it might have done, the true cause of this spirited girl's recent coldness to him.

"Oh! I don't mean—I don't mean——"

But her distress was unheeded, perhaps unheard; for he had wheeled and was walking rapidly away. She let her pruning-shears fall unnoted to the ground as she stood mutely looking after him, and as he disappeared through the gate she covered her face for an instant with her hands and then ran, as if in fright, into the house.

Meanwhile Gid stalked on homeward, not turning his head to one side or the other, except once to glare stolidly at the handsome roadsters of Casey Pallam as he rattled by toward the Major's.

III.

Two weeks later the annual sale of the Major's yearlings took place. Gid was

not present, it being the first of the sales that he had ever missed, except those which had occurred during his absence at college. He had a representative in attendance, however, in Bob Ozley, whom he commissioned to buy, if he could with the limited capital put at his disposal, certain of the colts and fillies whose numbers Gid had marked on the catalogue for his friend's guidance.

For Gid had determined, within the fortnight intervening between his departure from the Major's and the sale, that he would go into business for himself, and business with him, as has been noted already, meant horses. Concerning one thing he had made up his mind : he would regain, if possible, by his own efforts, the estate which his father had squandered. His desire to do this was impatiently strong since that galling taunt of Jean Heath's, and although he told himself that henceforth Jean Heath was as dead

to him as poor Tom Heath himself, yet he knew that his greatest incentive to the recuperation of his fortunes which he proposed was his wish, in the vindication of his self-respect, that she should see, and be compelled to acknowledge, his prosperity.

He procured fifteen hundred dollars by mortgaging his little farm, and this he authorized Bob Ozley to invest in young thoroughbreds at the sale.

"Couldn't do much for you, Gid," Ozley reported. "But I bid in three youngsters, though they were not the ones you wanted most. Your first choices brought higher figures than our pile would reach."

"Yes, I expected that."

"But I got you the *Babette* colt for seven hundred, and the *Paquita* filly for five-fifty. They're good, for the money, I think. Then I had no trouble about that two-year-old *Brunhilde* colt. Nobody

seemed to want him, and pretty much everybody laughed when he was knocked down to me for one hundred and sixty dollars. What do you want with the ugly beast, anyway? "

Gid smiled. " He isn't a beauty ; but I have an idea that there is some outcome in him if his villainous temper can be cured."

" Well, I shouldn't care to have him on my hands, even at the price. Why wasn't he sold twelve months ago as a yearling? Nobody wanted him? "

" That was it," Gid smiled. " If you call him ugly now, you ought to have seen him as a yearling. I remember very well no one would make a bid for him then, and he and the *Alsatia* colt, who was sick and was not offered, were the only two in last year's catalogue that were not sold."

" Ah! that *Alsatia* colt is a jewel; brought the top price to-day, too."

"He ought to have done so. Who got him?"

"Casey Pallam. All the high-rollers were after him, but Pallam outlasted them and bid him in for eight thousand and five hundred."

"He's worth it, in my opinion," Gid answered; "and if Pallam runs him this season he ought to win him out as a two-year-old. Major Heath thinks him the finest colt he ever bred—better even than *Moloch*, who was last year's wonder."

"Maybe he won't have such smooth sailing, after all, if you start your *Brunhilde* wonder against him," Ozley suggested, with a grin.

"Never mind about my *Brunhilde* wonder. He won't have to run against *Alsatia* colts often, I reckon. Besides, I don't expect to start him until he is three years old. It will take a year to civilize him."

Gid was satisfied with his friend's pur-

chases. The *Babette* colt and the *Paquita* filly were excellently bred animals, and gave every promise of becoming serviceable racers. The *Brunhilde* colt was a whim of his, although it was based on his perception of good points in the ungainly youngster, which he thought might develop with careful handling, notwithstanding the suspicion that there was a flaw in his pedigree. He was registered as by *Glenelg*, or "unknown," out of *Brunhilde*, a *Bonnie Scotland* mare; and as that ominous "unknown" afforded ground for an assumption that the colt was a half-breed, or, at least, that he was not a thoroughbred, that assumption was, in accordance with a certain law of human nature, more generally made than the equally reasonable assumption that he was a *Glenelg*, and therefore, a thoroughbred—or rather the assumption that would have been equally as reasonable as the less generous one, if the latter had not

been, to some extent, confirmed by the uncomely appearance of the colt. Gid, however, was willing to take the risk of an imperfect pedigree. If the colt did unite the blood of *Glenelg* and *Bonnie Scotland* it was well enough bred for any purpose, and he was not sure that if his one-hundred-and-sixty-dollar investment was only a *Bonnie Scotland* half-breed it would not be able to cope with many of the fashionable strains of the modern turf; for Gid shared the opinion of some very astute horsemen, that among all her illustrious citizens the State of Tennessee can cherish no worthier name than that of *Bonnie Scotland*, the dead progenitor of one of the noblest lines of race-horses.

IV.

AT the opening of the following spring he was forced to admit that his hopes of success in his new business depended on

this ill-favored colt. His *Paquita* filly had died, and his *Babette* colt, after taking to training most kindly and showing indications of exceptional quality, had gone lame and had been turned out for the season. Unless, therefore, the *Brunhilde* colt should prove better than the general estimate of him, Gid realized that he had not only failed at the very outset of his undertaking, but that he had lost in the venture what little property his father had left him.

He was not at all sanguine about the colt, which was as surly and vicious a brute as ever rebelled against bit or saddle, and which (whatever could be said in his commendation) looked more like a camel than a race-horse. It was in a moment of disgust at these characteristics of the colt that Gid bestowed upon him the name of *Yaboo*, the designation by which the Persians contemptuously distinguish their native drudge horses from their highly prized Turcomans and Arabians.

He had placed *Yaboo* in the hands of Uncle Lije Heath, to whom the Major, his old master, had given a strip of ground adjacent to the Heath farm, and who, following the honored and responsible calling of a public trainer, had won the confidence of the community and so prospered as to add enough land to the Major's gift to enable him to lay off a half-mile track, on which he "worked" the horses committed to his care. It was with some misgiving that Uncle Lije had undertaken to prepare *Yaboo* for the turf. He not only felt sure that the "varmint" was "cold-blooded," but that even if there was the making of a race-horse in him it would be impossible to do anything with him on account of his temper. But, as *Yaboo* belonged to "Mr. Gid," who had been the friend of "Marse Tom" and a special *protégé* of Uncle Lije's, the old trainer consented to take charge of the colt and promised to do the best he could

with him. "'Sides," he added, " dey ain't no tellin' how he mout turn out, nohow, I ain't nuvver seed de hawse yit wid a drap o' ole *Bonnie Scotlan's* blood in his veins dat anybody got any call to say he ain't no 'count fo' he's had a fa'r show."

As the winter broke and the mild weather gave Uncle Lije an opportunity to put the colt into active training, the old man began to make more encouraging reports concerning his charge. " He des ez mean ez ever, Mr. Gid—en da's de meanis I ever come acrost yit. He all heels en teef whenever you come nigh him, en wunst you git on his back de Lawd knows whah you gwiner lan' de nex' minute. Wid his buckin' en r'arin' en sulkin' I ain't nuvver seed his ekal ; you git him on de track en he lunge all over it, wid his head 'twixt his laigs, er stan'-nin' straight up on his hine feet ; en ef you do git him started des likely ez not he gwiner bolt clean over de fence 'fo' you

know whut he gwiner do nex'. He doin' a leetle better dough now, sence Alec Saffel commenced wukin wid him. Somehow he sorter takes to Alec mo'n to anybody else, cepn—cepn—I mean Alec's de onles boy he'll let ride him to do any good ; en dis mawnin Alec he wuked him a mile in '49, en dat ain't so bad fer a hawse ez high in flesh ez *Yaboo* is yit."

It was Gid's intention to start *Yaboo* in the Kentucky Derby, the great race of the South and West for three-year-olds, if the colt's improvement should be such as to warrant anything like a reasonable hope that he might be of sufficiently high class to stand even a remote chance of winning the stake. As the time approached for the race Gid began to feel that there might be such a chance, if *Yaboo* could be prevailed upon to run kindly ; for, with one or two exceptions, the three-year-olds of that season were not considered extraordinary, and even *Yaboo*

might be good enough to run with them, if *Yaboo* could be induced to run at all. Of course, nothing in the race could expect to contest it with *Huguenot*, if *Huguenot* came to the post in good condition. *Huguenot*—who was the *Alsatia* colt Casey Palfam had bought at the Major's sale—had proved the best of the preceding season's two-year-olds, winning nine successive stakes, and retiring into winter quarters with an unbeaten record. It was generally conceded, and by none more freely than by *Gid*, that if the colt did not go amiss he would also have the principal three-year-old stakes at his mercy. But the uncertainties of spring racing led *Gid* to decide that if anything should happen to prevent what seemed the inevitable victory of *Huguenot* in the Derby, *Yaboo* should, if possible, be ready to compete for the prize.

Meanwhile, during the year which had elapsed since his departure from the

Major's, he had not seen Jean Heath, except at a distance—across the pews at church, perhaps, or dashing over the country with her father or friends ; for she was a reckless and adept horsewoman.

About two weeks before the date fixed for the Derby Gid rode over to Uncle Lije's to look at *Yaboo*, and just before reaching the gate into the old trainer's domain he saw two female figures on horseback ride through it and gallop off down the road. One of them he recognized as Jean ; but the fact that she had visited Uncle Lije or Aunt Polly was in no way surprising to him, for he knew that those two worthies, who considered themselves members in good standing of the Heath family, enjoyed the special favor of the Major and his daughter, and that the latter had succeeded to the place in Uncle Lije's affections which perhaps only the sister of "Marse Tom" could have filled.

As the two figures on horseback disappeared behind a green swell of the undulating meadow that swept the smooth turnpike out of view Gid withdrew his eyes from that point of the landscape, and turning through the gate, rode around to the stables, where he found Uncle Lije in the act of removing a side-saddle from the back of *Yaboo*. The old trainer cast a somewhat apprehensive glance at Gid, and shaking his head wisely and grinning in a manner not to be explained by any evident provocation, hastened to say, before Gid had an opportunity to speak himself :

“He’s comin’ on, Mr. Gid, he’s comin’ on; wuked a mile dis mawnin’ wid his shoes on in ’47. De ole *Bonnie Scotlan’* blood begins to warm up, I tell you! Ef he keeps on disaway dey’ll hear fum us in dat Derby yit, en *Huguenot* he gotter be feelin lak hisse’f ef he wanter have a walk-over.”

"But why have you had that side-saddle on him?" Gid asked, with more dignity than usually characterized his conversation with Uncle Lije.

"Oh, dat ain't gwiner do no harm," evasively.

"Uncle Lije, one of those ladies who left here a few minutes ago has been riding *Yaboo*!"

"Well, dat don't mek no diffunce," the old negro replied, uneasily. "Alec Saffel he wuz sick dis mawnin', en Miss Jean she happen to come by, en she took it into her head she wanter breeze *Yaboo* 'roun' de track, en long's *Yaboo* need de wuk, en long's Miss Jean she alluz could do mo' wid dat hawse den any yuther livin' soul, not scusin' Alec Saffel hisse'f, I s'posed I mout ez well let her have her way."

As he thought of Jean Heath riding that fiendish brute, Gid for the first time in his life burned with anger against Uncle Lije. Taking the saddle from the ground, he

tossed it with some vehemence under the shed, enjoining Uncle Lije that he was never, upon penalty of having the horse shot, to allow Miss Heath to touch *Yaboo* again.

"Yes, suh," he answered in bewilderment; "but," he added, under his breath, as he turned to throw a blanket over *Yaboo*, "I'd ruther be hamstrung den tell Honey dat."

V.

IT was Derby day in Kentucky. For weeks past its approach had been the incentive to more comment than any other day on the calendar, Christmas alone, perhaps, excepted. For months even the papers had devoted a liberal portion of their space to daily discussions of the horses which might be expected to start in the Derby and their relative chances of winning it. This space had gradually increased as the day drew nearer, until for

a fortnight immediately preceding its dawn the Derby gossip had been the most conspicuous feature of the local columns of the Louisville press, while there had been no important journal throughout the country which had not kept its readers informed by telegraph of all the news that could be gleaned concerning the race. Speculation about it was general, even among those who knew nothing of the thoroughbred and cared nothing for the sport.

It was a strong evidence of the hold this race has upon the Kentuckians that this spring, when it was conceded on all sides that it would be a "gift" to *Huguenot*, the lack of the usual element of uncertainty could not degrade Derby day from its pre-eminence in popular interest. At that time the Kentucky Derby was not only the first of the great regular events of the American turf, but it was more coveted by horsemen than any other prize of the year.

In it the prides of the Bluegrass met on equal terms the giants of the Pacific slope and the choicest of the Eastern three-year-olds, and five minutes after the struggle was over the conqueror was worth to his owner a respectable fortune ; for in addition to the five or six thousand dollars which the stake was worth, the winner also usually won with the stake that which was of far greater value, the reputation of being the best colt of his age this side of England.

To-day all roads in some way connected with Louisville. The Bluegrass plateau was virtually depopulated. The Legislature had adjourned for the occasion and come down from Frankfort the night before, followed by the Governor and the rest of the State officers. Tennessee, Indiana, Ohio, to say nothing of other more distant sections of the country, were largely represented by crowds of visitors that overflowed the hotels and filled the

lean maws of the boarding-houses. It was a holiday in the city ; many of the shops and stores were closed ; others dozed with one door open, while some clerk, less fortunate than his fellows, kept lonely vigil within. The May sun never shone with more exhilarating splendor, and by twelve o'clock the avenues leading to the race-course at Churchill Downs began to assume an unwonted animation. The street-cars were packed with people, and an unusual number of vehicles rolled over the thoroughfares. By two o'clock the principal boulevard leading to the Downs was a vivid panorama of speeding roadsters and whirring wheels, the gala procession swelled by every conveyance that could be pressed into service.

At Churchill Downs everything had been put in readiness for this long-expected afternoon. Club house and grandstand were jauntily repainted ; the hedges were primly trimmed ; the lawns and

flower-beds were as freshly and geometrically irreproachable as nature and man could make them ; the field around which the race-course winds was one great ellipsoid of wimpling bluegrass ; while the course itself had been cudgelled and cozened into a smooth and soft elasticity whose very touch beneath his hoofs would make the veriest " plug " feel for the moment as if the blood of all Arabia bounded in his veins.

By half-past two, when the first race was called, the grand-stand was thronged ; the overflowing crowd filled the grounds about it, and the grass of the field was crushed and hidden from sight beneath the feet of thousands, who stood in the sun, and joked and laughed and scuffled, waiting for the running of the great race.

Gid Bronxon had decided to start *Yaboo* in the Derby, although he had no real hope of beating *Huguenot*, whom he knew to be in excellent condition. But there is

always a possibility that some accident may befall the best of horses ; and, besides, it would be worth something to anybody's colt to run as well as second to *Huguenot*, as Uncle Lije had more than once insisted. Young Bronxon did not begrudge *Huguenot* his coming triumph ; he was too genuine an admirer of fleetness and gameness in a thoroughbred not to admire at all times his triumph honestly won. Nevertheless, he could not help feeling somewhat rebellious against his untoward fate that he should be prevented from winning this race, which would mean so much to him, by the superiority of a horse whose owner was, of all men, Casey Pallam, the fortune-favored young Tennessean, who, if report was reliable, was no surer of winning the Derby than he was of winning Jean Heath herself.

The first race was a three-quarter-mile dash, with nearly a score of contestants, whose coyness and fretfulness at the post

were watched with impatience by the spectators, who resented anything that would delay the principal race of the day. A start was at last made, with every jockey fighting for the lead ; and as they turned into the homestretch one of the horses was seen to fall, and immediately afterward another tumbled over him. As the second went down Gid Bronxon, who was watching the race through a pair of field-glasses, uttered a slight exclamation and hastened toward the scene of the accident. The two fallen horses were quickly on their feet, none the worse for their misadventure, and one of the jockeys also sprang up, laughingly brushing the dust from his gorgeously colored jacket ; but the other rider lay where he had been thrown, and as Gid came up he saw that the boy was, as he had thought, Alec Saffel. A physician, who was not hard to find in the crowd which had hurried to the spot, declared that the little fellow had suffered

no injury more serious than the dislocation of a shoulder. Gid had him taken to the club-house and properly cared for ; and then walked out listlessly on the lawn, his hands aimlessly in his pockets and his eyes fixed vacuously on the variegated foliage of the plants that shaped a jockey's cap and saddle at his feet. His last chance of winning the Derby, insignificant as it had been, had gone, for young Saf-fel's mishap would prevent him riding *Yaboo*, and even if another good jockey could be secured at that late hour, it was extremely improbable that anyone unfamiliar with the horse would be able to manage him.

Uncle Lije came slowly forward, looking so lugubrious that Gid, who was not wearing a very cheerful expression himself, could not repress a smile. " Well, Mr. Gid," forlornly, " luck's gone agin us."

" It seems so, Uncle Lije."

"I knowed sumpn bad wus gwiner happen 'fo' night, case I tied one shoe 'fo' I put on tother dis mawnin, en I ain't nuvver seed dat sign miss yit."

"Well, we'll have to withdraw *Yaboo* and save him for some other day. Alec will be all right before the meeting is over, I reckon," Gid answered, with some attempt at consolation.

"We gotter try fer de Derby anyhow," Uncle Lije maintained. "Dat race wuff mo' to us den all de res' *Yaboo* kin run in de whole meetin'—you know dat widout me tellin' you, Mr. Gid. So I done got dis-yere boy Whitlock to ride him, stid-dier Alec. We hatter take our chances, Mr. Gid, dough de Lawd knows dey mighty slim shakes. Alec Saffel de onles boy yit ever could do anything wid dat *Yaboo*."

Gid authorized Uncle Lije to do whatever he thought best, and then made his way absently to a seat high up in the

grand-stand. There he sat until after the second race, with his head bared gratefully to the breeze, and his eyes directed toward the misty billows of the Indiana hills. And as he gazed at them they seemed, as from a majestic amphitheatre, to look down with exalted indifference upon this paltry scene of excitement and contention about him ; and catching something of the spirit of their philosophical serenity, he told himself that a man was a fool who, with no more resources than his, ventured upon the turf with the expectation of keeping his head above it. Reaching this sagacious conclusion, he diverted his eyes from the Indiana hills to a certain spot in the ladies' section of the grand-stand, where Jean Heath and her aunt were sitting.

This change of view did not result in reflections that were particularly profitable or pleasing, for perhaps the most definite impressions which he received were, that

the bonnet of Jean's aunt was aggressively old-fashioned as she sat among those stylish Louisville girls, and that the clothes of Casey Pallam, who was constantly saying something that made Jean laugh, were conspicuously new and his diamonds were disgustingly dazzling.

VI.

AT four o'clock the bell rang to call the horses from the stables for the Derby. Most of them, however, had already been on the track for several minutes, taking their "warming-up canters," in hoods and blankets, preliminary to the desperate struggle through which they were expected to go a little later. As they brushed by the stand many were the glasses levelled upon them and as many were the criticisms passed upon their movements and prospects ; while the uni-

versal inquiry was, "Which is *Huguenot*?"

If it was difficult to distinguish *Huguenot* from the other blanketed figures, there was one horse, at least, easy of identification by those who knew him; for as the others were galloping around the course, away across the field, at one of the gates opening from the stables to the track, he was prancing and plunging, resisting all efforts to coax or drive him. Gid Bronx-on knew, even before he focussed his glasses upon the refractory beast and recognized Uncle Lije at his head, that it was *Yaboo*.

At the ringing of the second bell—the signal that the horses should be saddled for the race—there was a suddenly increased stir among the concourse of people that stretched far back beyond the grand-stand to the long pavilion where the odds were laid against the wise men's ability to "pick the winner." It was to

this spot that hundreds were pressing, madmen for the moment in their efforts to "back their judgment;" surging like fierce breakers against the rocks to dash their money on their favorites. "*Huguenot!*" "*Huguenot!*" was the cry from all quarters. Everybody wanted "*Huguenot*," the "sure thing," and such a continuous rush was made upon him that he was "swept off the boards."

"Long odds against the outsiders!" was the itinerant chorus. "Anything you want against the short ones!" "Who is this *Yaboo*? Fifty to one *Yaboo*!" "One hundred to one *Yaboo*!"

"Boss, gimme two dollars' wuff dat hunnud to one *Yaboo*," said Uncle Lije, who having succeeded in getting the horse on the track, had slipped over for a moment "to take a look at de odds."

"What do you know about *Yaboo*, Uncle?" some one inquired, eager for a "tip" from the old trainer, as he walked

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away with his bit of pasteboard calling for \$202 if *Yaboo* should win.

"No'h'n'—don't nobody know no'h'n' 'bout dat hawse. I des reskin' two dollars on his *Bonnie Scotlan'* blood."

"Then you don't think he stands any chance of winning?"

"I dun-know no'h'n' 'bout dat; but ef he takes it into his head dat he feels lak runnin' dis evenin', en his rider kin keep him fum boltin' de track, er jumpin' de fence, er cuttin' up some er his oudacious shines, de hawse whut beats him is gotter call on all fo' his laigs, da's all."

The horses were over in the paddock now, their grooms sponging their mouths, tightening girths and giving them other last touches of preparation for the race. Most of them were ready, and were being led slowly around the paddock, while the jockeys stood about, receiving the final instructions and waiting the signal to mount and proceed to the starting-post.

The signal was not long in coming. The president of the club, with his coat buttoned tightly about him and a flower on his lapel, arose in the judge's stand, and with a deliberation worthy the importance of the moment, rang the bell for the third and last time. Instantly there was a wild break from the grounds below to the grand-stand, which was already full, and every foot of space was found and occupied by some one anxious to secure a position from which to witness the race. From end to end the stand was one serried mass of people, packed tier above tier, its right section fluttering with the ribbons and the fans of the ladies, who in their holiday attire presented, from a slight distance, the appearance of a vast matted bank of many-colored, breeze-stirred bloom. The sward between the grand-stand and the track was thronged, and over in the field the inner circumference of the course, for a quarter of a

mile, was a great crescent of swarming human beings, on foot, on horseback, and in all varieties of vehicles. Across the field the roofs of the stables, which circumscribe the course, were black with men and boys, and even beyond the limits of the Association's grounds the trees and the telegraph-poles were living witnesses of the scene.

One of the Kentucky senators occupied a seat in the judges' stand, while the other was opposite, holding a timer's watch. On the platform adjoining the judges' stand was a bevy of distinguished strangers—a Governor or two, a rotund justice of the Court of Appeals, a few millionaires, and an eminent Englishman of letters, who was travelling and lecturing in America, as well as collecting notes which he did not expect to publish until he got safely back on the other side of the ocean.

The sprinkling-cart was hauled from the track by two sturdy draught horses, stol-

idly oblivious of the fact that they were literally drawers of water for their more aristocratic fellows in the paddock ; the gate from the paddock was then opened, and the first of the Derby contestants minced daintily through it to the course, and was received with a round of hand-clapping. It was *Petrel*, a colt which would have been highly thought of if *Huguenot* had not been in the race ; and as he paraded before the grand-stand and then dashed off to the half-mile post, at which the start was to be made, he was a striking picture of equine beauty. Following him from the paddock came *Timarch*, a well - formed, well - bred black giant, who looked, however, a little too fleshy for such a race as the Derby. Seven of the nine starters thus appeared, and each was awarded some sign of applause. As the eighth leaped lithely to the track with elastic step and free stride a cheer broke from thousands, which was repeated as

the intelligent creature turned his head curiously toward his admirers, and as his jockey, grinning with gratification, lifted his cap in acknowledgment of the greeting. It was *Huguenot*, of course; no other horse on the grounds would have met such an ovation; and as he came forth the orange and blue of the Pallam colors, plaited about his mane and decking his rider, were unnecessary for his identification by the public. With his slender barrel, his deep chest, his powerful quarters, his hard muscles, his smooth legs, his small, symmetrical head, his gentle, fearless eyes, his strong, flexile action, his lustrous coat, and his rich blood-bay color, relieved by a dash of white on forehead and pastern, he was as perfect a specimen of patrician horseflesh as ever sprang from that remarkable sire of handsome and great racers, the dead *Virgil*. Shaking his head from side to side as if for very joy in the ecstasy of mo-

tion, he was followed by a parting cheer as he cantered off to the starting-post; and Gid Bronxon, who was standing near the railing that separated the crowd from the track, saw Casey Pallam, a few feet away, smile radiantly as he lifted his hat to Jean Heath, who was beaming on him from the grand-stand.

The next moment Uncle Lije at his bit and young Whitlock on his back succeeded in getting *Yaboo* from the paddock to the course. As the uncomely colt plunged right and left, stubbornly refusing to obey either the cajoleries or the chastisement of his rider, laughter echoed from stand and field, and rose again as a big voice exclaimed, "Hitch him to the water-cart!" Gid Bronxon flushed as he saw Casey Pallam join in the laughter and cast an amused glance in the direction of Jean Heath. But he did not look at Jean Heath again himself.

Yaboo—and coming just after *Huguenot*,



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at that—was a rather laughable object, with his long, gangling body made still more grotesque by his contortions; his big, aquiline-nosed head; and his ashy color, of that particular shade of light chestnut which belonging to a plough-horse, would have been called “clay-bank”—a shade which cannot be made to take on a gloss, however great the care of the groom, and which appeared all the more commonplace under the silk of *Gid's* colors of crimson and creamy white.

After much persuasion and lashing *Yaboo* at last switched his tail in the air impatiently and rushed off rapidly toward the other horses, which were waiting for him at the half-mile post. Arriving there, he refused to stop, but ran on a quarter of a mile farther before Whitlock could check him; and ten minutes more were consumed in bringing him back to the starting-post. A good half-hour was then wasted in attempting to get him off with

the other horses, but when they were moving forward in line *Yaboo* was otherwise engaged, in trying to dismount his rider, in kicking out lustily at the starter's assistant, in waltzing, bucking, rearing, and other favorite divertissements of his, or in suddenly turning and scudding away in the opposite direction to that in which the race was to be run.

The spectators were at first amused at these antics of *Yaboo's*, but their patience, as well as that of the starter, was fast becoming exhausted, and it looked as if it would be necessary to leave the crimson and white behind and run the race without *Yaboo's* assistance, when Gid smiled as he saw Uncle Lije go up to the judges and engage those officials in earnest conversation, emphasizing it with many obeisances and gestures. The old trainer was well known by the officers of the Association, and they probably had dealings with no one for whom they had more respect.

He was evidently well pleased with his call, for when he left the judge's stand he was wreathed in smiles. Before Gid could reach him he had disappeared through the crowd, but the next minute a messenger from the judges was galloping across the field to inform the starter that another jockey would be allowed to ride *Yaboo*, and a few moments later Gid caught sight of Uncle Lije driving a buggy furiously toward the half-mile post, with a boyish figure in crimson and white at his side. He wondered idly what jockey Uncle Lije had picked up now, but was satisfied that it was of no importance who rode *Yaboo*, as nothing could be expected from the colt in his present humor.

Through his glasses he saw Uncle Lije and his companion spring from the buggy and go upon the track ; saw Whitlock dismount with alacrity, and the new jockey approach *Yaboo* in front and stand for an instant patting him on the nose ; saw him

vault from Uncle Lije's hand into the saddle, and then bend over the colt and stroke his neck for a few seconds ; saw him lift himself in his seat and gently shake the reins, and saw *Yaboo* walk slowly toward the other horses ; saw him come abreast of them, then saw, like a flash of refracted light, a many-colored platoon plunge forward. The next instant the red flag had cut the air to the earth, there was a resonant shout from the grand-stand, and the Derby had begun.

For nearly a hundred yards the nine horses ran shoulder to shoulder in a beautiful line deployed straight across the track. Then the manœuvring for position commenced. Reins were tightened and others were slackened, and the brilliant hues of the jockeys wove in and out with shifting rapidity as some pushed to the front and others restrained their impatience. At the first quarter they were all close together, but divided into two pha-

lanxes, in the last of which was *Huguenot*, while at his flank was the big nose of *Yaboo*. At the start *Huguenot*, with a bound like a panther's, had sprung to the front, but his rider had promptly taken him in hand, and was now leaning far back in his saddle in his effort to keep the spirited animal from making his race too soon. The crimson and white of *Yaboo* had not been at all conspicuous in that kaleidoscopic change of colors except for the persistency with which they remained just in the rear of the Pallam orange and blue.

As the horses swung into the stretch for the first time the trailing division closed on that in front, and they rounded the turn all bunched. But only for two or three seconds did they run in this order, for as the long stretch was fairly entered *Petrel* burst from the ruck and shot to the van, increasing his speed at every stride until by the time he had covered fifty yards he was fully three lengths ahead of all the

others. Then another rein was loosened, and the big black form of *Timarch* loomed out in hot pursuit of the flying *Petrel*, followed by a general quickening of the pace by the others. Down the stretch they came, their shining coats and burnished trappings glinting against the sun, and the dust rising luminously in their wake. As they neared the stand *Petrel* was still leading, but *Timarch* was following with a rush that was fast lessening the distance between them. Behind *Timarch*, two lengths away, were the others in a pack, from which the shapely head of *Huguenot* showed slightly in advance of the remaining six. That head was sawing from side to side desperately as the colt fought against the unyielding bit that kept him from spurning his company and leaping disdainfully to the lead. Meanwhile, at his saddle-girth, unmindful of his disdain, and seemingly of everything else, *Yaboo* lounged sleepily along.

As the end of the stand was reached *Timarch* worked up to *Petrel*, and the two raced down to the "wire," cheered on by the applause of the spectators. They ended the first half mile of the race head and head, passing lapped together under the wire, and beginning in earnest the mile which was yet to be traversed. As they dashed by the judges the other horses were four lengths behind them ; but just at this point *Huguenot's* jockey relaxed his reins a little and with a wonderful bound that shook the grand-stand with a shout of joy, the orange and blue began to cut down the gap which *Petrel* and *Timarch* had made. In a second *Huguenot* was clear of the bunch, and leaving it farther in his rear at every one of those mighty, graceful bounds. But in another second *Yaboo's* rider had bent forward slightly, and *Yaboo* himself, appearing to wake from his dreams, switched his tail and hurried off in pursuit of his late com-

panion. "Just look at old Water-cart!" yelled the big voice again, and before the laughter had subsided *Yaboo's* nose was back at its old place at *Huguenot's* saddle-girth: in another moment it was at his throat-latch; and in two more strides the crimson and white and the orange and blue were streaming through the sunlight blended together. The excitement now began to grow intense as the next quarter was finished with *Huguenot* and *Yaboo* side by side, only a length behind *Petrel* and *Timarch*, still lapped, while the others were struggling some lengths away. It was as if for the time there were two races, one between *Petrel* and *Timarch* and the other between *Huguenot* and *Yaboo*, with nothing to indicate which would be the winner of either. It was evident, however, that *Petrel* and *Timarch* were running at the top of their speed, while the other two each had something yet in reserve.

Gid Bronxon felt the hand that held his

glasses become a trifle unsteady as he watched the good work which *Yaboo* was doing, and yielding to a sudden impulse he glanced up in the grand-stand, but he could not see either Jean Heath or her aunt. Looking over into the field, he broke into a nervous laugh as he caught sight of Uncle Lije hilariously tossing his hat high in the air.

But his laugh instantly died away when he levelled his glasses on the horses again. They were approaching the turn into the backstretch, in the same order as last noted, when *Yaboo* abruptly left *Huguenot* and bolted obliquely to the opposite side of the track, an action which sent a murmurous commotion through the throngs which saw it, and left no doubt in any one's mind that all chances for the crimson and white were over. For *Huguenot* not only went on alone in pursuit of *Petrel* and *Timarch*, but by the time *Yaboo* had been pulled back into the course every

horse in the race had passed that obstinate brute.

Along the backstretch it soon began to look as if the result would be between *Petrel* and *Huguenot*, for *Timarch* faltered, and then dropped back to *Huguenot*, the latter going by the tired black colt quickly, and now rapidly overtaking the gallant *Petrel*. In the next twenty yards he collars *Petrel*, and a cry goes up from the grand-stand. There seems nothing in the race now except the two, and in another twenty yards the cry swells into an exultant roar as *Huguenot's* colors flash to the lead. *Petrel's* jockey draws his whip and plies it vigorously, and the brave colt makes an heroic effort to recover his lost ground. But it is useless. *Petrel's* race is run, and *Huguenot* enters on the last half-mile two good lengths in front, which it is easy to see he can make a dozen if necessary. "It's all over!" is the exclamation which rises above the pande-

monium in the field and the grand-stand. "It's *Huguenot's* race!" "There's nothing in it that can make him run!" "He wins in a walk!"

Huguenot swings into the homestretch retaining his advantage without an effort, and running with a free action that is as beautiful as it is powerful, his rider sitting motionless in supreme confidence that all that is required of him now is to hold the horse to his course.

The great crowd is laughing good-humoredly at *Huguenot's* easily won Derby. Many in it are shaking each other's hands, and Gid Bronxon observes that those near Casey Pallam are boisterously congratulating him.

Suddenly there is a new tumult. "Look!" "Look!" "Who is that?" "See how he comes!" For out from the rear tears a tornado of dust, swirling by horse after horse with a swiftness that is electric in its effect on those who see it.

"Who is it?" "Who is it?" "What are those colors?" And a big voice bellows, "By the great Geehosaphat if it ain't old Water-cart!" "Yaboo!" "Yaboo!" "Yaboo!" proclaim a thousand straining tongues, and the reverberant shouts startle from his fancied security *Huguenot's* jockey, who, turning in his seat, looks over his shoulder and sees swooping down on him that pillar of dust, out from which, even as he looks, there leaps like a gleam of lightning a sheen of crimson and white—and *Yaboo* is once more alongside of *Huguenot*. The rider in orange and blue is no longer motionless in his saddle; his arms beat the air rapidly as he shakes the reins, and his heels strike against *Huguenot's* sides incessantly, as, for the first time, he begins to urge the son of *Virgil* to do his best. But *Yaboo* is not to be gotten rid of easily. It is as if he were borne on by some preternatural force, on which he has been hurled forward with a

momentum that is resistless. Do what he can, *Huguenot* cannot shake that demon from his side, and an eighth of a mile from the end the two are neck and neck, and each is running as he has never run before. On they plunge, stride for stride, the dust rising and hanging over the other horses a few yards behind them, whose riders are now making a last desperate attempt to force them to the front. And as they respond with their final rally, and dash furiously forward in a close cluster through that lowering dust, their hoofbeats echo like the rhythmically rolling rumble of low thunder, the quick lashes cleave the dust-cloud against the light like wind-writhen rain, and it is, indeed, as if a storm were sweeping down the course, from which those two terror-stricken beasts just in front of it are fleeing for their lives. On they fly, from one storm into another—from the storm behind them into the storm that bursts before them

from ten thousand throats. They are so near now that the play of their tense muscles can be seen without the aid of glasses ; but near as they are, those myriad eyes cannot see which, if either, leads the other. They are so near that the delicate nostrils of *Huguenot*, dilated to their utmost in this mighty struggle, glow like opalescent fire. They are so near that, straining, as if almost they would leave their sockets, the whites of *Yaboo's* eyes are plainly visible. *Huguenot*, with every faculty of his beautiful body and dauntless spirit thrown into this supreme effort, is superb, and more than worthy of every one of those deafening plaudits, "*Huguenot!*" "*Huguenot!*" *Yaboo* in motion, now the incarnation of a terrific power, is grand, and deserves that frantic acclaim, "*Yaboo!*" "*Yaboo!*". Pitted together they are magnificent, and "*Huguenot!*" "*Huguenot!*" "*Yaboo!*" "*Yaboo!*" "*Yaboo wins!*" "*Huguenot wins!*" rend



that mad multitude with a warring chaos of enthusiasm. On they come, even yet as though yoked together; but now as they reach the sixteenth pole, is it—can it be that the crimson has forged just a hand's-breadth in front of the orange? "*Huguenot* is beaten!" rises from the people like a groan of defeat and a yell of victory. His jockey immediately raises his whip, and *Huguenot* for the first time in his life feels the sting of raw-hide. "*Huguenot* is whipping!" is heard above that wild uproar, if there is anyone to hear. The sensitive creature springs gamely from the lash, and with an herculean bound wrests the lead from his competitor. "*Huguenot* has him!" "*Huguenot* wins!" and the multitude sways and storms over the triumph of the favorite—for triumph it must be as the goal is now not fifteen yards away. *Yaboo's* jockey bends lower over his horse's withers; there is a tremulous motion of his hands,

a convulsive pressure of his knees, a quick lifting as if of the horse by the rider, and while the cruel blows yet fall on *Huguenot's* flank, *Yaboo*, amid an outburst that must startle the far Indiana hills, hurtles past the judges, winner, by a "head," of the Kentucky Derby.

As the jockeys rode back to the judges' stand to dismount after the finish of the race, Gid Bronxon suddenly sprang through the gate to the track, and hurrying to *Yaboo*, lifted his drooping rider from the saddle. His own face was as pale as the boy's, and as he held the exhausted figure for an instant in his arms he saw tears trembling on the little fellow's lashes. "Put me down, quick, quick!" came from the quivering lips, and like one in a dream Gid placed him on the ground. The crimson and white jacket disappeared immediately into the latticed weighing-room. In a moment Gid saw it come forth and slip away



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through the crowd. A minute later he caught a glimpse of it by Uncle Lije's side, as the old trainer drove away in the buggy ; and while the eyes of perhaps all in that throng were directed upon the horse that had won the Derby, and upon the time of the race, which had just been posted, Gid, going to the topmost railing of the grand-stand, followed with a dazed look the buggy as it left the grounds, turned into the old road that extends beyond them, and stopped in front of a little cottage back among the trees. Then he saw the crimson and white jacket leave the buggy and run up to the door, into the arms of a lady who was standing there, and on whose head was an aggressively old-fashioned bonnet.

The cottage, he happened to know, belonged to the old woman who had charge of the women's dressing-rooms beneath the grand-stand, and glancing in that direction as he made his way be-

low, he saw her sitting faithfully at her post.

About eight o'clock that evening Gid met Major Heath in the lobby of the Galt House, and after receiving the old gentleman's congratulations the two engaged in a conversation which concluded in this way:

"I'm afeard not, Gid. Jean is in a terrible tantrum. Cryin' all the time, an' says she never wants to see nobody ag'in."

"But, Major, if it is possible, I *must* speak to her, somehow."

"Come along then, an' I'll see if I c'n manage it."

VII.

AMONG the "Notes" which followed a long description of the Derby in a Louisville paper next day were these:

"IT is reported that the owner of *Yaboo*

was offered \$10,000 for him within half an hour after the race yesterday."

"IT was noticed that the jockey who rode *Yaboo* had neither whip nor spurs. It is said that the horse will not submit to punishment."

"THE most important and happiest man in town last night was old Uncle Lije Heath, who trained the Derby winner. He says he knew all the time that *Yaboo* was no half-breed, and that his *Bonnie Scotland* blood was bound to pull him through. Uncle Lije won two thousand dollars on the result."

"IT is said that young Smith, who piloted *Yaboo* to victory, never rode in a race before. If such is the case the lad's performance was nothing short of marvellous. Smith is from the country, and was discovered by Uncle Lije Heath, who says, however, that the boy's parents

would never consent to his going upon the turf. This is unfortunate, as there is no doubt that he would soon rank with the premier jockeys of America. Uncle Lije explains that Smith would not have ridden yesterday if the horse had not been a favorite of his, and if the ridicule with which the crowd greeted *Yaboo* had not made the boy indignant."

"THE genial Major Heath, of Woodford County, was seen by a reporter in front of the Galt House late last night, in company with Mr. Bronxon, the owner of *Yaboo*. The Major seemed as radiant over the result as Mr. Bronxon himself, as the great son of *Glenelg* and *Brunhilde* was bred by the Major, being the first Derby winner he has yet produced. He sold *Yaboo* as a two-year-old, he says, for \$160. Mr. Bronxon, in response to an inquiry by the reporter, said he thought that yesterday's experience would satisfy

him, and that he would seek no further honors on the turf. Major Heath intimated that there was some probability of the formation of a partnership between himself and Mr. Bronxon for the management of the former's stock-farm, an intimation which Mr. Bronxon did not deny."



AUNT FOUNTAIN'S
PRISONER

BY JOEL CHANDLER HARRIS



IT is curious how the smallest incident, the most unimportant circumstance, will recall old friends and old associations. An old gentleman, who is noted far and near for his prodigious memory of dates and events, once told me that his memory, so astonishing to his friends and acquaintances, consisted not so much in remembering names, and dates, and facts, as in associating each of these with some special group of facts and events ; so that he always had at command a series of associations to which he could refer instantly and confidently. This is

an explanation of the system of employing facts, but not of the method by which they are accumulated and stored away.

I was reminded of this some years ago by a paragraph in one of the county newspapers that sometimes come under my observation. It was a very commonplace paragraph ; indeed, it was in the nature of an advertisement—an announcement of the fact that orders for “gilt-edged butter” from the Jersey farm on the Tomlinson Place should be left at the drug-store in Rockville, where the first that came would be the first served. This business-like notice was signed by Ferris Trunion. The name was not only peculiar, but new to me ; but this was of no importance at all. The fact that struck me was the bald and bold announcement that the Tomlinson Place was the site and centre of trading and other commercial transactions in butter. I can only imagine what effect this announcement would have had on my

grandmother, who died years ago, and on some other old people I used to know. Certainly they would have been horrified ; and no wonder, for when they were in their prime the Tomlinson Place was the seat of all that was high, and mighty, and grand in the social world in the neighborhood of Rockville. I remember that everybody stood in awe of the Tomlinsons. Just why this was so, I never could make out. They were very rich ; the Place embraced several thousand acres ; but if the impressions made on me when a child are worth anything, they were extremely simple in their ways. Though no doubt they could be formal and conventional enough when occasion required.

I have no distinct recollection of Judge Addison Tomlinson, except that he was a very tall old gentleman, much older than his wife, who went about the streets of Rockville carrying a tremendous gold-headed cane carved in a curious manner.

In those days I knew more of Mrs. Tomlinson than I did of the judge, mainly because I heard a great deal more about her. Some of the women called her Mrs. Judge Tomlinson ; but my grandmother never called her anything else but Harriet Bledsoe, which was her maiden name. It was a name, too, that seemed to suit her, so that when you once heard her called Harriet Bledsoe you never forgot it afterward. I do not know now, any more than I did when a child, why this particular name should fit her so exactly ; but, as I have often been told, a lack of knowledge does not alter facts.

I think my grandmother used to go to church to see what kind of clothes Harriet Bledsoe wore ; for I have often heard her say, after the sermon was over, that Harriet's bonnet, or Harriet's dress, was perfectly charming. Certainly Mrs. Tomlinson was always dressed in the height of fashion, though it was a very simple fash-

ion when compared with the flounces and furbelows of her neighbors. I remember this distinctly, that she seemed to be perfectly cool the hottest Sunday in summer, and comfortably warm the coldest Sunday in winter; and I am convinced that this impression, made on the mind of a child, must bear some definite relation to Mrs. Tomlinson's good taste.

Certainly my grandmother was never tired of telling me that Harriet Bledsoe was blessed with exceptionally good taste and fine manners, and I remember that she told me often how she wished I was a girl, so that I might one day be in a position to take advantage of the opportunities I had had of profiting by Harriet Bledsoe's example. I think there was some sort of attachment between my grandmother and Mrs. Tomlinson, formed when they were at school together, though my grandmother was much the older of the two. But there was no intimacy. The

gulf that money sometimes makes between those who have it and those who lack it lay between them. Though I think my grandmother was more sensitive about crossing this gulf than Mrs. Tomlinson.

I was never in the Tomlinson house but once when a child. Whether it was because it was two or three miles away from Rockville, or whether it was because I stood in awe of my grandmother's Harriet Bledsoe, I do not know. But I have a very vivid recollection of the only time I went there as a boy. One of my playmates, a rough-and-tumble little fellow, was sent by his mother, a poor, sick woman, to ask Mrs. Tomlinson for some preserves. I think this woman and her little boy were in some way related to the Tomlinsons. The richest and most powerful people, I have heard it said, are not so rich and powerful but they are pestered by poor kin, and the Tomlinsons were no exception to the rule.

I went with this little boy I spoke of, and I was afraid afterward that I was in some way responsible for his boldness. He walked right into the presence of Mrs. Tomlinson, and, without waiting to return the lady's salutation, he said, in a loud voice :

"Aunt Harriet, ma says send her some of your nicest preserves."

"*Aunt Harriet*, indeed!" she exclaimed, and then she gave him a look that was cold enough to freeze him, and hard enough to send him through the floor.

I think she relented a little, for she went to one of the windows, bigger than any door you see nowadays, and looked out over the blooming orchard; and then after a while she came back to us, and was very gracious. She patted me on the head, and I must have shrunk from her touch, for she laughed and said she never bit nice little boys. Then she asked me my name; and when I told her, she said my grandmother was the

dearest woman in the world. Moreover, she told my companion that it would spoil preserves to carry them about in a tin bucket, and then she fetched a big basket and had it filled with preserves, and jelly, and cake. There were some ginger-preserves among the rest, and I remember that I appreciated them very highly ; the more so, since my companion had a theory of his own that ginger-preserves and fruit-cake were not good for sick people.

I remember, too, that Mrs. Tomlinson had a little daughter about my own age. She had long yellow hair and very black eyes. She rode around in the Tomlinson carriage a great deal, and everybody said she was remarkably pretty, with a style and a spirit all her own. The negroes used to say that she was as affectionate as she was wilful, which was saying a good deal. It was characteristic of Harriet Bledsoe, my grandmother said, that her little girl should be named Lady.

I heard a great many of the facts I have stated from old Aunt Fountain, one of the Tomlinson negroes, who, for some reason or another, was permitted to sell ginger-cakes and persimmon-beer under the wide-spreading China trees in Rockville on public days and during court-week. There was a theory among certain envious people in Rockville—there are envious people everywhere—that the Tomlinsons, notwithstanding the extent of their landed estate and the number of their negroes, were sometimes short of ready cash, and it was hinted that they pocketed the proceeds of Aunt Fountain's persimmon-beer and ginger-cakes. Undoubtedly such stories as these were the outcome of pure envy. When my grandmother heard such gossip as this, she sighed and said that people who would talk about Harriet Bledsoe in that way would talk about anybody under the sun. My own opinion is that Aunt Fountain

got the money and kept it ; otherwise she would not have been so fond of her master and mistress, nor so proud of the family and its position. I spent many an hour near Aunt Fountain's cake and beer-stand, for I liked to hear her talk. Besides, she had a very funny name, and I thought there was always a probability that she would explain how she got it. But she never did.

I had forgotten all about the Tomlinsons until the advertisement I have mentioned was accidentally brought to my notice, whereupon memory suddenly became wonderfully active. I am keenly alive to the happier results of the war, and I hope I appreciate at their full value the emancipation of both whites and blacks from the deadly effects of negro slavery, and the wonderful development of our material resources that the war has rendered possible ; but I must confess it was with a feeling of regret I learned that the

Tomlinson Place had been turned into a dairy-farm. Moreover, the name of Ferris Trunion had a foreign and an unfamiliar sound. His bluntly worded advertisement appeared to come from the mind of a man who would not hesitate to sweep away both romance and tradition if they happened to stand in the way of a profitable bargain.

I was therefore much gratified, some time after reading Trunion's advertisement, to receive a note from a friend who deals in real-estate, telling me that some land near the Tomlinson Place had been placed in his hands for sale, and asking me to go to Rockville to see if the land and the situation were all they were described to be. I lost no time in undertaking this part of the business, for I was anxious to see how the old place looked in the hands of strangers, and unsympathetic strangers at that.

It is not far from Atlanta to Rockville—

a day and a night—and the journey is not fatiguing ; so that a few hours after receiving my friend's request I was sitting in the veranda of the Rockville Hotel, observing, with some degree of wonder,



the vast changes that had taken place—the most of them for the better. There were new faces and new enterprises all around me, and there was a bustle about the town that must have caused queer sensations in the minds of the few old citizens who still gathered at the post-office

for the purpose of carrying on ancient political controversies with each other.

Among the few familiar figures that attracted my attention was that of Aunt Fountain. The old China tree in the shade of which she used to sit had been blasted by lightning or fire ; but she still had her stand there, and she was keeping the flies and dust away with the same old turkey-tail fan. I could see no change. If her hair was grayer, it was covered and concealed from view by the snow-white handkerchief tied around her head. From my place I could hear her humming a tune—the tune I had heard her sing in precisely the same way years ago. I heard her scolding a little boy. The gesture, the voice, the words were the same she had employed in trying to convince me that my room was much better than my company, especially in the neighborhood of her cake-stand. To see her and hear her thus, gave me a peculiar feel-

ing of homesickness. I approached and saluted her. She bowed with old-fashioned politeness, but without looking up.

"De biggest uns, dee er ten cent," she said, pointing to her cakes; "en de littlest, dee er fi' cent. I make um all myse'f, suh. En de beer in dat jug—dat beer got body, suh."

"I have eaten many a one of your cakes, Aunt Fountain," said I, "and drank many a glass of your beer; but you have forgotten me."

"My eye weak, suh, but dee ain' weak nuff fer dat." She shaded her eyes with her fan, and looked at me. Then she rose briskly from her chair. "De Lord he'p my soul!" she exclaimed, enthusiastically. "W'y, I know you w'en you little boy. W'at make I ain' know you w'en you big man? My eye weak, suh, but dee ain' weak nuff fer dat. Well, suh, you mus' eat some my ginger-cake. De

Lord know you has make way wid um w'en you wuz little boy."

The invitation was accepted, but somehow the ginger-cakes had lost their old-time relish ; in me the taste and spirit of youth were lacking.

We talked of old times and old friends, and I told Aunt Fountain that I had come to Rockville for the purpose of visiting in the neighborhood of the Tomlinson Place.

"Den I gwine wid you, suh," she cried, shaking her head vigorously. "I gwine wid you." And go she did.

"I bin layin' off ter go see my young mistiss dis long time," said Aunt Fountain, the next day, after we had started. "I glad I gwine deer in style. De niggers won' know me skacely, ridin' in de buggy dis away."

"Your young mistress?" I inquired.

"Yes, suh. You know Miss Lady w'en she little gal. She grown 'oman now."

"Well, who is this Trunion I have heard of?"

"He monst'ous nice w'ite man, suh. He married my young mistiss. He monst'ous nice w'ite man."

"But who is he? Where did he come from?" Aunt Fountain chuckled convulsively as I asked these questions.

"We-all des pick 'im up, suh. Yes, suh; we-all des pick 'im up. Ain' you year talk 'bout dat, suh? I dunner whar you bin at ef you ain' never is year talk 'bout dat. He de fus' w'ite man w'at I ever pick up, suh. Yes, suh; de ve'y fus' one."

"I don't understand you," said I; "tell me about it."

At this Aunt Fountain laughed long and loudly. She evidently enjoyed my ignorance keenly.

"De Lord knows I oughtn' be laughin' like dis. I ain't laugh so hearty sence I wuz little gal mos', en dat wuz de time w'en Marse Rowan Tomlinson come 'long

en ax me my name. I tell 'im, I did, 'I'm name Flew Ellen, suh.' Marse Rowan he deaf ez any dead hoss. He 'low, 'Hey?' I say, 'I'm name Flew Ellen, suh.' Marse Rowan say, 'Fountain! Huh! he quare name.' I holler en laugh, en w'en de folks ax me w'at I hollerin' 'bout, I tell um dat Marse Rowan say I'm name Fountain. Well, suh, fum dat day down ter dis, stedd' Flew Ellen, I'm bin name Fountain. I laugh hearty den en my name got change, en I feard ef I laugh now de hoss'll run away en turn de buggy upperside down right spang on top er me."

"But about this Mr. Trunion?" said I.

"Name er de Lord!" exclaimed Aunt Fountain, "ain' you never is bin year 'bout dat? You bin mighty fur ways, suh, kaze we all bin knowin' 'bout it fum de jump."

"No doubt. Now tell me about it."

Aunt Fountain shook her head and her face assumed a serious expression.

"I dunno 'bout dat, suh. I year tell dat niggers ain' got no business fer go talkin' 'bout fambly doin's. Yit dar wuz yo' gran'mammy. My mistiss sot lots by her, en you been bornded right yer 'long wid um. I don't speck it'll be gwine so mighty fur out'n de fambly ef I tell you 'bout it."

I made no attempt to coax Aunt Fountain to tell me about Trunion, for I knew it would be difficult to bribe her not to talk about him. She waited awhile, evidently to tease my curiosity ; but as I betrayed none, and even made an effort to talk about something else, she began :

"Well, suh, you ax me 'bout Marse Fess Trunion. I know you bleeze ter like dat man. He ain' b'long ter we-all folks, no funder dan he my young mistiss ole man, but dee ain' no finer w'ite man dan him. No, suh ; dee ain'. I tell you dat p'intedly. De niggers, dee say he mighty close en pinchin', but deze is mighty

pinchin' times—you know dat yo'se'f, suh. Ef a man don't fa'rly fling 'way he money, dem Tomlinson niggers, dee'll say he mighty pinchin'. I hatter be pinchin' myse'f, suh, kaze I know time I sell my ginger-cakes dat ef I don't grip onter de money, dee won' be none lef' fer buy flour en 'lasses fer make mo'. It de Lord's trufe, suh, kaze I done had trouble dat way many's de time. I say dis 'bout Marse Fess Trunion, ef he ain' got de blood, he got de breedin'. Ef he ain' good ez de Tomlinsons, he lots better dan some folks w'at I know."

I gathered from all this that Trunion was a foreigner of some kind, but I found out my mistake later.

"I pick dat man up myse'f, en I knows 'im 'most good ez ef he wuz one er we-all."

"What do you mean when you say 'you picked him up?'" I asked, unable to restrain my impatience.

“ Well, suh, de fus' time I see Marse Fess Trunion wuz terreckerly atter de Sherman army come 'long. Dem wuz hot times, suh, col' ez de wedder wuz. Dee wuz in about er million un um look like ter me, en dee des ravage de face er de yeth. Dee tuck all de hosses, en all de cows, en all de chickens. Yes, suh ; dee cert'n'y did. Man come 'long, en 'low, 'Aunty, you free now,' en den he tuck all my ginger-cakes w'at I bin bakin' 'g'inst Chris'mus' ; en den I say, 'Ef I wuz free ez you is, suh, I'd fling you down en take dem ginger-cakes 'way fum you.' Yes, suh. I tole 'im dat. It make me mad fer see de way dat man walk off wid my ginger-cakes.

“ I got so mad, suh, dat I foller 'long atter 'im little ways ; but dat ain' do no good, kaze he come ter whar dee wuz some yuther men, en dee 'vide up dem cakes till dee want no cake lef'. Den I struck 'cross de plan'ation, en walked



'bout in de drizzlin' rain tell I cool off my madness, suh, kaze de flour dat went in dem cakes cos' me mos' a hunderd dollars in good Confedrick money. Yes, suh ; it did dat. En I work for dat money mighty hard.

“ Well, suh, I ain' walk fur 'fo' it seem like I year some un talkin'. I stop, I did, en lisßen, en still I year um. I ain' see nobody, suh, but still I year um. I walk fus' dis away en den dat away, en den I walk 'roun' en 'roun', en den it pop in my min' 'bout de big gully. It ain' dar now, suh, but in dem days we call it de big gully, kaze it wuz wide en deep. Well, suh, 'fo' I git dar I see hoss-tracks, en dee led right up ter de brink. I look in, I did, en down dar dee wuz a man en a hoss. Yes, suh ; dee wuz bofe down dar. De man wuz layin' out flat on he back, en de hoss he wuz layin' sorter up en down de gully en right on top er one er de man legs, en eve'y time de hoss'd scrample en try

fer git up de man 'ud talk at 'im. I know that hoss mus' des a nata'lly groun' dat man legs in de yeth, suh. Yes, suh. It make my flesh crawl w'en I look at um. Yit de man ain' talk like he mad. No, suh, he ain' ; en it make me feel like somebody done gone en hit me on de funny-bone w'en I year 'im talkin' dat away. Eve'y time de hoss scuffle, de man he 'low, 'Hol' up, ole fel, you er mashin' all de shape out'n me.' Dat w'at he say, suh. En den he 'low, 'Ef you know how you hurtin', ole fel, I des know you'd be still.' Yes, suh. Dem he ve'y words.

"All dis time de rain wuz a-siftin' down. It fall mighty saft, but 'twuz monst'ous wet, suh. Bimeby I crope up nigher de aidge, en w'en de man see me he holler out, 'Hol' on, aunty ; don't you fall down yer!'

"I ax 'im, I say, 'Marster, is you hurt-ed much?' Kaze time I look at 'im I know he ain' de villyun w'at make off wid

my ginger-cakes. Den he 'low, ' I speck I hurt purty bad, aunty, en de wuss un it is dat my hoss keep hurtin' me mo'.'

"Den nex' time de ho'ss move it error-tate me so, suh, dat I holler at 'im loud ez I ken, 'Wo dar, you scan'lous villyun! Wo!' Well, suh, I speck dat hoss mus' a-bin use'n ter niggers, kaze time I holler at 'im he lay right still, suh. I slid down dat bank, en I kotch holter dat bridle—I don't look like I'm mighty strong, does I, suh?" said Aunt Fountain, pausing suddenly in her narrative to ask the question.

"Well, no," said I, humoring her as much as possible. "You don't seem to be as strong as some people I've seen."

"Dat's it, suh!" she exclaimed. "Dat w'at worry me. I slid down dat bank, en I kotch dat hoss by de bridle. De man say, 'Watch out dar, aunty! don't let he foot hit you. Dee one cripple too much now.' I ain' pay no' 'tention, suh. I des

grab de bridle, en I slew dat hoss head roun', en I fa'rly lif' 'im on he foots. Yes, suh, I des lif' 'im on he foots. Den I led 'im down de gully en turnt 'im a-loose, en you ain' never see no hoss supjued like dat hoss wuz, suh. Den I went back whar de man layin', en ax 'im ef he feel better, en he 'low dat he feel like he got a big load lif' offen he min', en den, mos' time he say dat, suh, he faint dead away. Yes, suh. He des faint dead away. I ain' never is see no man like dat, w'at kin be jokin' one minnit en den de nex' be dead, ez you may say. But dat's Marse Fess Trunion, suh. Dat's him up en down.

" Well, suh, I stan' dar, I did, en I ain' know w'at in de name er de Lord I gwine do. I wuz des ez wringin' wet ez if I'd a-bin baptize in de water ; en de man he wuz mo' wetter dan w'at I wuz, en goodness knows how long he bin layin' dar. I run back ter de big-'ouse, suh, mighty nigh a mile, en I done my level bes' fer

fin' some er de niggers en git um fer go wid me back dar en git de man. But I ain' fin' none un um, suh. Dem w'at ain' gone wid de Sherman army, dee done hide out. Den I went in de big-'ouse, suh, en tell Mistiss 'bout de man down dar in de gully, en how he done hurted so bad he ain' kin walk. Den Mistiss—I speck you done fergit Mistiss, suh—Mistiss, she draw herse'f up en ax w'at business dat man er any yuther man got on her plantation. I say, 'Yassum, dat so; but he done dar, en ef he stay dar he gwine die dar.' Yes, suh; dat w'at I say. I des put it at Mistiss right pine-blank.

“Den my young mistiss—dat's Miss Lady, suh—she say dat dough she spize um all dez bad ez she kin, dat man mus' be brung 'way from dar. Kaze, she say, she don't keer how yuther folks go on, de Tomlinsons is bleeze to do like Christun people. Yes, suh. She say dem ve'y words. Den Mistiss, she 'low

dat de man kin be brung up en put in de corn-crib, but Miss Lady, she say no, he mus' be brung en put right dar in de big-'ouse in one er de up-sta'rs rooms, kaze maybe some er dem State er Georgy boys mought be hurted up dar in de Norf, en want some place fer stay at. Yes, suh. Dat des de way she talk. Den Mistiss, she ain' say nothin', yet she hol' her head mighty high.

"Well, suh, I went back out in de yard, en den I went 'cross ter de nigger-quarter, en I ain' gone fur tell I year my ole man prayin' in dar some'r's. I know 'im by he v'ice, suh, en he wuz prayin' des like it wuz camp-meetin' time. I hunt 'roun' fer 'im, suh, en bimeby I fin' 'im squattin' down behime de do'. I grab 'im, I did, en I shuck 'im, en I 'low, 'Git up fum yer, you nasty, stinkin' ole



villyun, you!' Yes, suh; I wuz mad. I say, 'W'at you doin' squattin' down on de flo'? Git up fum dar en come go 'long wid me!' I hatter laugh, suh, kaze w'en I shuck my ole man by de shoulder, en holler at 'im, he put up he two han', suh, en squall out, 'Oh, pray, marster! Don't kill me dis time, en I ain' never gwine do it no mo'!'

"Atter he 'come pacify, suh, den I tell him 'bout de man down dar in de gully, en yit we ain' know w'at ter do. My ole man done hide out some er de mules en hosses down in de swamp, en he feard ter go atter um, suh, kaze he skeerd de Sherman army would come marchin' back en fine um, en he 'low dat he mos' know dee er' comin' back atter dat man down dar. Yes, suh. He de skeerdest nigger w'at I ever see, ef I do say it myse'f. Yit, bime-by he put out atter one er de hosses, en he brung 'im back; en we hitch 'im up in de spring-waggin' en atter dat man we

went. Yes, suh; we did dat. En w'en we git dar, dat ar man wuz plum ravin' deestracted. He wuz laughin' en talkin' wid hese'f, en gwine on, tell it make yo' blood run col' fer lissen at 'im. Yes, suh.

"Me en my ole man, we pick 'im up des like he wuz baby. I come mighty nigh droppin' 'im, suh, kaze one time, wiles we kyarn 'im up de bank, I year de bones in he leg rasp up 'g'inst one er n'er. Yes, suh. It made me blin' sick, suh. We kyard 'im home en put 'im up-st'ars, en dar he stayed fer many's de long day."

"Where was Judge Tomlinson?" I asked. At this Aunt Fountain grew more serious than ever—a seriousness that was expressed by an increased particularity and emphasis in both speech and manner.

"You axin' 'bout Marster? Well, suh, he wuz dar. He wuz cert'n'y dar wid Mistsiss en Miss Lady, suh, but look like he ain' take no intruss in w'at gwine on. *Some* folks 'low, suh, dat he ain' right in

he head, but dee ain' know 'im—dee ain' know 'im, suh, like we-all. Endurin' er de war, suh, he wuz strucken wid de polzy, en den w'en he git well, he ain' take no intruss in w'at gwine on. Dey'd be long days, suh, w'en he ain' take no notice er nobody ner nuttin' but Miss Lady. He des had dem spells; en den, ag'in, he'd set out on de peazzer en sing by hese'f, en it make me feel so lonesome dat I bleeze ter cry. Yes, suh; it's de Lord's trufe.

“ Well, suh, dat man w'at I fin' out dar in de gully wuz Mars Fess Trunion. Yes, suh; de ve'y same man. Dee ain' no tel-lin' w'at dat po' creetur gone thoo wid. He had fever, he had pneumony, en he had dat broke leg. En all 'long wid dat dee want skacely no time w'en he want laughin' en jokin'. Our w'ite folks, dee des spized 'im kase he bin wid Sherman army. Dee say he wuz Yankee; but I tell um, suh, dat ef Yankee look dat away

dee wuz cert'n'y mighty like we-all. Mistiss, she ain' never go 'bout 'im wiles he sick; en Miss Lady, she keep mighty shy, en she tu'n up her nose eve'y time she year 'im laugh. Oh, yes, suh. Dee cert'n'y spize de Yankees endurin' er dem times. Dee hated um rank, suh. I tell um, I say, 'You-all des wait. Dee ain' no nicer man dan w'at he is, en you-all des wait tell you know 'im.' *Shoo!* I des might ez well talk ter de win', suh—dee hate de Yankees dat rank.

“By de time dat man git so he kin creep 'bout on crutches, he look mos' good ez he do now. He wuz dat full er life, suh, dat he bleeze ter go down-st'ars, en down he went. Well, suh, he wuz mighty lucky dat day. Kaze ef he'd a run up wid Mistiss en Miss Lady by hese'f, dee'd er done sumpn' ner fer ter make 'im feel bad. Dee cert'n'y would, suh. But dee wuz walkin' 'roun' in de yard, en he come out on de peazzer whar Marster

wuz sunnin' hese'f en singin'. I wouldn' b'lieve it, suh, ef I ain' see it wid my two eyes; but Marster got up out'n he cheer, en straighten hese'f en shuck han's wid Mars Fess, en look like he know all 'bout it. Dee sot dar, suh, en talk en laugh, en laugh en talk, tell bimeby I 'gun ter git skeerd on de accounts er bofe un um. Dee talk 'bout de war, en dee talk 'bout de Yankees, en dee talk politics right straight 'long des like Marster done 'fo' he bin strucken wid de polzy. En he talk sense, suh. He cert'n'y did. Bimeby Mistiss en Miss Lady come back fum dee walk, en dee look like dee gwine drap w'en dee see w'at gwine on. Dem two mens wuz so busy talkin', suh, dat dee ain' see de wimmen folks, en dee des keep right on wid dee argafyin'. Mistiss en Miss Lady, dee ain' know w'at ter make er all dis, en dee stan' dar lookin' fus' at Marster en den at one er n'er. Bimeby dee went up de steps en start to go by,

but Marster he riz up en stop um. Yes, suh. He riz right up, en stop um, en right den en dar, suh, he make um inter-juiced ter one an'er. He stan' up en he say, 'Mr. Trunion, dis my wife; Mr. Trunion, dis my daughter.'

"Well, suh, I wuz stannin' back in de big hall, en w'en I see Marster gwine on dat away my knees come mighty nigh failin' me, suh. Dis de fus' time w'at he reckermember anybody name, an de fus' time he do like he useter, sence he bin sick wid de polzy. Mistiss en Miss Lady, dee come 'long in atter w'ile en dee look like dee skeerd. Well, suh, I des fa'rly preach at um. Yes, suh; I did dat. I say, 'You see dat? You see how Marster doin'? Ef de han' er de Lord ain' in dat, en he han' ain'd bin in nuttin' on de top side er dis yeth.' I say, 'You see how you bin cuttin' up 'roun' dat sick w'ite man, wid yo' biggity capers, en yit de Lord retch down en make Marster soun' en well time

de yuther w'ite man tetch 'im.' Well, suh, dey wuz dat worked up dat dey sot down en cried. Yes, suh ; dey did dat. Dey cried. En I ain' tellin' you no lie, suh, I stood dar en cried wid um. Let 'lone dat, I des fa'rly boohooed. Yes, suh ; dat's me. W'en I git ter cryin', sho' nuff, I bleeze ter boohoo.

“ Fum dat on, Marster do like hese'f en talk like hese'f. It look like he bin sleep long time, suh, en de sleep done 'im good. All he sense come back ; en you know, suh, de Tomlinsons, w'en dey at deese'f, got much sense ez dee want en some fer give way. Mistiss and Miss Lady, dee wuz mighty proud 'bout Marster, suh, but dee ain' fergit dat de yuther man wuz Yankee, en dee hol' deese'f monst'ous stiff. He notice dat hese'f, en he want ter go 'way, but Marster, he 'fuse ter lissen at 'im right pine-blank, suh. He say de dead Tomlinsons would in about turn over in dee graves ef dee know he sont a

cripple man 'way from he 'ouse. Den he want ter pay he board, but Marster ain' lissen ter dat, en needer is Mistiss; en dis mighty funny, too, kaze right dat minnit dee want a half er dollar er good money in dee whole fambly, ceppin' some silver w'at I work fer en w'at I hide in er chink er my chimbley. No, suh. Dee want er half er dollar in de whole fambly, suh. En yit dee won't take de greenbacks w'at dat man offer um.

"By dat time, suh, de war wuz done done, en dee wuz tough times. Dee cert'n'y wuz, suh. De railroads wuz all broke up, en eve'ything look like it gwine helter-skelter right straight ter de Ole Boy. Dey want no law, suh, en dey want no nuttin'; en ef it hadn't er bin fer me en my ole man I speck de Tomlinsons, proud ez dee wuz, would er bin mightily pinch't fer fin' bread en meat. But dee ain' never want fer it yit, suh, kaze w'en me en my ole man git whar we can't move no

further, Marse Fess Trunion, he tuck holt er de place en he fetcht it right side up terreckerly. He say ter me dat he gwine pay he board dat away, suh, but he ain' say it whar de Tomlinsons kin year 'im, kaze den dee'd a-bin a fuss, suh. But he kotch holt, en me, en him, en my ole man, we des he't eve'ything hot. Mo' speshu-ally Marse Fess Trunion, suh. You ain' know 'im, suh, but dat ar w'ite man, he got mo' ways ter work, en mo' short cuts ter de ways, suh, dan any w'ite man w'at I ever see, en I done see lots un um. It got so, suh, dat me en my ole man ain' have ter draw no mo' rashuns fum de F'eedman Bureau; but dee wuz one spell, suh, w'en wuss rashuns dan dem wuz on de Tomlinson table.

“ Well, suh, dat w'ite man, he work en he scuffle; he hire niggers, and he turn um off; he plan, en he projick; en 'tain' so mighty long, suh, 'fo' he got eve'ything gwine straight. How he done it I'll never

tell you, suh; but do it he did. He put he own money in dar, suh, kaze dee wuz two times dat I knows un w'en he git money out'n de pos'-office, en I see 'im pay it out ter de niggers, suh. En all dat time he look like he de happies' w'ite man on top er de groun', suh. Yes, suh. En w'en he at de 'ouse Marster stuck right by 'im, en if he bin he own son he couldn't pay him mo' 'tention. Dee wuz times, suh, w'en it seem like ter me dat Marse Fess Trunion wuz a-cuttin' he eye at Miss Lady, en den I 'low ter myse'f, 'Shoo, man! you mighty nice en all dat, but you Yankee, en you nee'nter be a-drappin' yo' wing 'roun' Miss Lady, kaze she too high-strung fer dat.'

"It look like he see it de same way I do, suh, kaze atter he git eve'ything straight he say he gwine home. Marster look like he feel mighty bad, but Mistiss en Miss Lady, dee ain' say nuttin' 'tall. Den, atter w'ile, suh, Marse Fess Trunion

fix up, en off he put. Yes, suh. He went off whar he come fum, en I speck he folks wuz mighty glad ter see 'im atter so long, kaze ef dee ever wuz a plum nice man it wuz dat man. He want no great big man, suh, en he ain' make much fuss, yit he lef' a mighty big hole at de Tomlinson Place w'en he pulled out fum dar. Yes, suh; he did dat. It look like it lone-some all over de plan'ation. Marster, he 'gun ter git droopy, but eve'y time de dinner-bell ring he go ter de foot er de sta'rs en call out, 'Come on, Trunion!' Yes, suh. He holler dat out eve'y day, en den, wiles he be talkin', he'd stop en look roun' en say, 'Whar Trunion?' It ain' make no diffunce who he talkin' wid, suh, he'd des stop right still en ax, 'Whar Trunion?' Den de niggers, dee got slack, en eve'ything' 'gun ter go een'ways. One day I run up on Miss Lady settin' down cryin', en I ax her w'at de name er goodness de matter, en she say nuff de

matter. Den I say she better go ask her pappy whar Trunion, en den she git red in de face, en 'low I better go 'ten' ter my business; en den I tell her dat ef somebody ain' tell us whar Trunion is, en dat mighty quick, dee won't be no business on dat place fer 'ten' ter. Yes, suh. I tol' her dat right p'intedly, suh.

“ Well, suh, one day Marse Fess Trunion come a-drivin' up in a shiny double-buggy, en he look like he des step right out'n a ban'-box; en ef ever I wuz glad ter see anybody, I wuz glad ter see dat man. Marster was glad; en dis time, suh, Miss Lady wuz glad, en she show it right plain; but Mistiss, she still sniff de a'r en hol' her head high. 'Twant long, suh, 'fo' we all knowed dat Marse Fess wuz gwine marry Miss Lady. I ain' know how dee fix it, kaze Mistiss never is come right out en say she 'greeable 'bout it, but Miss Lady wuz a Bledsoe, too, en a Tomlinson ter boot, en I ain' never see

nobody w'at impatient nuff fer ter stan' out 'g'inst dat gal. It ain' all happen, suh, quick ez I tell it, but it happen ; en but fer dat, I dunno w'at in de name er goodness would er 'come er dis place."

A few hours later, as I sat with Trunion on the veranda of his house, he verified Aunt Fountain's story, but not until after he was convinced that I was familiar with the history of the family. There was much in that history he could afford to be proud of, modern though he was. A man who believes in the results of blood in cattle is not likely to ignore the possibility of similar results in human beings ; and I think he regarded the matter in some such practical light. He was a man, it seemed, who was disposed to look lightly on trouble once it was over with, and I found he was not so much impressed with his struggle against the positive scorn and contempt of Mrs. Tomlinson—a struggle that was infinitely more important and

protracted than Aunt Fountain had described it to be—as he was with his conflict with Bermuda grass. He told me laughingly of some of his troubles with his hot-headed neighbors in the early days after the war, but nothing of this sort seemed to be as important as his difficulties with Bermuda grass. Here the practical and progressive man showed himself; for I have a very vivid recollection of the desperate attempts of the farmers of that region to uproot and destroy this particular variety.

As for Trunion, he conquered it by cultivating it, for the benefit of himself and his neighbors, and I suspect that this is the way he conquered his other opponents. It was a great victory over the grass at any rate. I walked with him over the Place, and the picture of it all is still framed in my mind—the wonderful hedges of Cherokee roses, and the fragrant and fertile stretches of green Bermuda through

which beautiful fawn-colored cattle were leisurely making their way. He had a theory that this was the only grass in the world fit for the dainty Jersey cow to eat.

There were comforts and conveniences on the Tomlinson Place not dreamed of in the old days, and I think there was substantial happiness there, too. Trunion himself was a wholesome man, a man full of honest affection, hearty laughter, and hard work—a breezy, companionable, energetic man. There was something boyish, unaffected, and winsome in his manners, and I can easily understand why Judge Addison Tomlinson, in his old age, insisted on astonishing his family and his guests by exclaiming, "Where's Trunion?" Certainly he was a man to think about and inquire after.

I have rarely seen a livelier woman than his wife, and I think her happiness helped to make her so. She had inherited a certain degree of cold stateliness from her

ancestors, but her experience after the war and Trunion's unaffected ways had acted as powerful correctives, and there was nothing in the shape of indifference or haughtiness to mar her singular beauty.

As for Mrs. Tomlinson—the habit is still strong in me to call her Harriet Bledsoe—I think that in her secret soul she had an ineradicable contempt for Trunion's extraordinary business energy. I think his "push and vim," as the phrase goes, shocked her sense of propriety to a far greater extent than she would have been willing to admit. But she had little time to think of these matters; for she had taken possession of her grandson, Master Addison Tomlinson Trunion, and was absorbed in his wild and boisterous ways, as grandmothers will be. This boy, a brave and manly little fellow, had Trunion's temper, but he had inherited the Tomlinson air. It became him well, too, and I think Trunion was proud of it.

"I am glad," said I, in parting, "that I have seen Aunt Fountain's Prisoner."

"Ah!" said he, looking at his wife, who smiled and blushed, "that was during the war. Since then I have been a Prisoner of Peace."

I do not know what industrial theories Trunion has impressed on his neighborhood by this time, but he gave me a practical illustration of the fact that one may be a Yankee and a Southerner too, simply by being a large-hearted, whole-souled American.

TIRAR Y SOULT

BY REBECCA HARDING DAVIS





ROBERT KNIGHT, who was born, bred, and trained in New England, suckled on her creeds and weaned on her doubts, went directly from college to a Louisiana plantation. The change, as he felt, was extreme.

He happened to go in this way. He was a civil engineer. A company was formed among the planters in the Gulf parishes to drain their marshes in order to establish large rice-farms. James B. Eads, who knew Knight, gave his name to them as that of a promising young fellow who was quite competent to do the simple work that they required, and one, too, who would probably give more zeal and time to it than would a man whose reputation was assured.

After Mr. Knight had thoroughly examined the scene of operations, he was invited by the president of the company, M. de Fourgon, to go with him to his plantation, the Lit de Fleurs, where he would meet the directors of the company.

"The change is great and sudden," he wrote to his confidential friend, Miss Cramer. "From Boston to the Bed of Flowers, from the Concord School of Philosophy to the companionship of ex-

slave-holders, from Emerson to Gayarré ! I expected to lose my breath mentally. I expected to find the plantation a vast exhibit of fertility, disorder, and dirt ; the men, illiterate fire-eaters ; the women, houris such as our fathers used to read of in Tom Moore. Instead, I find the farm, huge, it is true, but orderly ; the corn-fields are laid out with the exact neatness of a Dutch garden. The Works are run by skilled German workmen. The directors are shrewd and wide-awake. Madame de Fourgon is a fat, commonplace little woman. There are other women—the house swarms with guests—but not an houri among them. Till to-morrow.

“ R. K.”

The conclusion was abrupt, but Knight had reached the bottom of the page of his writing-pad. He tore it off, put it in a business-envelope, and mailed it. He and Miss Cramer observed a certain

manly disregard to petty conventionalities. He wrote to her on the backs of old envelopes, scraps of wrapping-paper, anything that came first to hand. She liked it. He was poor and she was poor, and they were two good fellows roughing it together. They delighted in expressing their contempt for elegant knick-knackery of any sort, in dress, literature, or religion.

"Give me the honest—the solid!" was Emma Cramer's motto, and Knight thought the sentiment very high and fine. Emma herself was a little person, with an insignificant nose, and a skin, hair, and eyes all of one yellowish tint. A certain fluffiness and piquancy of dress would have made her positively pretty. But she went about in a tightly fitting gray gown, with a white pocket-handkerchief pinned about her neck, and her hair in a small knob on top.

But, blunt as she was, she did not like the blunt ending of this letter.

What were the women like who were not houris? He might have known that she would have some curiosity about them. Had they any intellectual training whatever? She supposed they could dance and sing and embroider like those poor things in harems——

Miss Cramer lived on a farm near the village of Throop. That evening, after she had finished her work, she took the letter over to read to Mrs. Knight. There were no secrets in any letter to her from Robert which his mother could not share. They were all intimate friends together, Mrs. Knight being, perhaps, the youngest and giddiest of the three. The Knights knew how her uncle overworked the girl, for Emma was an orphan, and dependent on him. They knew all the kinds of medicine she took for her dyspepsia, and exactly how much she earned by writing book-reviews for a Boston paper. Emma, too, could tell to a dollar what Robert's

yearly expenses had been at college. They had all shared in the terrible anxiety lest no position should offer for him, and rejoiced together in this opening in Louisiana.

Mrs. Knight ran to meet her. "Oh, you have had a letter, too? Here is mine!"

She read the letter with nervous nods and laughs of exultation, the butterfly-bow of yellow ribbon in her cap fluttering as if in triumph. Emma sat down on the steps of the porch with an odd, chilled feeling that she was somehow shut out from the victory.

"The 'Bed of Flowers?' What a peculiar name for a farm! And how odd it was in this Mr. de Fourgon to ask Robert to stay at his house! Do you suppose he will charge him boarding, Emma?"

"No, I think not."

"Well, Robert will save nothing by that. He must make it up somehow. I

wouldn't have him under obligation to the man for his keep. I've written to him to put his salary in the Throop Savings Bank till he wants to invest it. He will have splendid chances for investment, travelling over the country—East, West, South—everywhere! House full of women? I hope he will not be falling in love in a hurry. Robert ought to marry well now."

Miss Cramer said nothing. The sun had set, and a cold twilight had settled down over the rocky fields, with their thin crops of hay. To the right was Mrs. Knight's patch, divided into tiny beds of potatoes, corn, and cabbage. As Emma's eyes fell on it she remembered how many years she had helped the widow rake and weed that field, and how they had triumphed in every shilling which they made by the garden-stuff. For Robert—all for Robert!

Now he had laid his hand on the world's neck and conquered it! North and West

and that great tropical South, with its flowers and houris—all were open to him ! She looked around the circle of barren fields. He had gone out of doors, and she was shut in !

She bade his mother good-night, and went down the darkening road homeward. What a fool she was ! The fact that Robert had a good salary could not change the whole order of the world in a day. Her comradeship with Knight, their plans, their sympathy—this was the order of the world which seemed eternal and solid to poor Emma.

“I am his friend,” she told herself now. “If he had twenty wives, none of them could take my place.”

Now, Knight had not hinted at the possibility of wiving in his letter. There had never been a word or glance of love-making between him and Emma ; yet she saw him, quite distinctly now, at the altar, and beside him a black-eyed houri.

She entered the farm-house by the kitchen. There was the bacon, cut ready to cook for breakfast, and the clothes dampened for ironing. Up in her own bare chamber were paper and ink and two



books for review—"Abstract of Greek Philosophy" and "Subdrainage."

These reviews were one way in which she had tried to interest him. Interest him! Greek philosophy! Drainage!

She threw the books on the floor, and,

running to the glass, unloosened her hair and ran her fingers through it, tore the handkerchief from her neck, scanned with a breathless eagerness her pale eyes, her freckled skin, and shapeless nose, and then, burying her face in her hands, turned away into the dark.

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The night air that was so thin and chilly in Throop blew over the Lit de Fleurs wet and heavy with the scents, good and bad, of the Gulf marshes. Madame de Fourgon's guests had left the supper-table, and were seated on the low gallery which ran around the house, or lounged in the hammocks that swung under the huge magnolias on the lawn. There were one or two women of undoubted beauty among them ; but Robert Knight was not concerned, that night, with the good- or ill-looks of any woman, either in Throop or Louisiana. He was amused by a new companion, a Monsieur Tirar, who had ridden over from

a neighboring plantation. Knight at first took him for an overgrown boy ; but on coming close to him, he perceived streaks of gray in the close-cut hair and beard.

Tirar had sung and acted a comic song, after dinner, at which the older men laughed as at the capers of a monkey. While they were at cards he played croquet with the children. The women sent him on errands. " José, my thimble is in the library ! " " José, do see where the nurse has taken baby ! " etc.

A chair had been brought out now for M. de Fourgon's aunt, an old woman with snowy hair and delicate, high features. José flew to bring her a shawl and wrapped it about her. She patted him on his fat cheek, telling Knight, as he capered away, how invaluable was the *cher enfant*.

" He made that Creole sauce to-day. Ah, the *petit gourmand* has many secrets of crabs and soups. He says the *chefs* in Paris confide in him, but they are original,

monsieur; they are born in José's leetle brain—" tapping her own forehead.

" Ah, hear him now! 'Tis the voice of a seraph!" She threw up her hands, to command silence in earth and sky; leaning back and closing her eyes, while the little man, seated with his guitar at the feet of a pretty girl, sang. Even Knight's sluggish nerves were thrilled. He had never heard such a voice as this. It wrung his heart with its dateless pain and pathos. Ashamed of his emotion, he turned to go away. But there was a breathless silence about him. The Creoles all love music, and José's voice was famous throughout the Gulf parishes. Even the negro nurses stood staring and open-mouthed.

The song ended and Tirar lounged into the house. ♡

" Queer dog!" said M. de Fourgon. " He will not touch a guitar again perhaps for months."

"He would sing if I ask it," said the old lady. "He has reverence for the age."

M. de Fourgon, behind her, lifted his eyebrows. "José," he said, aside to Knight, "is a good fellow enough up here among the women and babies; but with his own crew, at the St. Charles, there is no more rakehellly scamp in New Orleans."

"Is he a planter?" asked the curious New Englander. Madame Dessaix's keen ears caught the question.

"Ah, the poor lad! he has no land, not an acre! His father was a Spaniard, Ruy Tirar, who married Bonaventura Soult. The Soult and Tirar plantations were immense on the Bayou Sara. José's father had his share. But crevasse—cards—the war—all gone!"—opening wide her hands. "When your government declared peace, it left our poor José, at twenty, with the income of a beggar."

"But that was fifteen years ago," said Knight. "Could he not retrieve his fort-

une by his profession—business? What does he do?"

"Do? do?"—she turned an amazed, perplexed face from one to the other. "Does he think that José shall work? José! *Mon Dieu!*"

"Tirar," said M. de Fourgon, laughing, "is not precisely a business-man, Mr. Knight. He has countless friends and kinsfolk. We are all cousins of the Tirars or Soultis. He is welcome everywhere."

"Oh!" said Knight, with a significant nod. Even in his brief stay in this neighborhood he had found other men than José living in absolute idleness in a community which was no longer wealthy. They were neither old, ill, nor incapable. It was simply not their humor to work. They were supported, and as carefully guarded as pieces of priceless porcelain. It is a lax, extravagant feature of life, as natural to Louisiana as it is impossible to Connecticut.

It irritated Knight, yet it attracted him, as any novelty does a young man. He turned away from his companions, and sauntered up and down in the twilight. To live without work on those rich, prodigal prairies, never to think of to-morrow, to give without stint, even to lazy parasites—there was something royal about that. It touched his fancy. He had known, remember, nothing but Throop and hard work for twenty-two years.

The air had grown chilly. Inside, M. Tirar had kindled a huge fire on the hearth. He was kneeling, fanning it with the bellows, while a young girl leaned indolently against the mantel, watching the flames, and now and then motioning to José to throw on another log. The trifling action startled Knight oddly. How they wasted that wood! All through his boyhood he used to gather every twig and chip. How often he had longed to make one big, wasteful fire, as they were doing now.

The young lady was a Miss Venn, who had been civil to him. It occurred to him that she was the very embodiment of the lavish life of this place. He did not, then or afterward, consider whether she was beautiful or not. But the soft, loose masses of reddish hair, and the large, calm, blue eyes must, he thought, belong to a woman who was a generous spendthrift of life.

Perhaps Knight was at heart a spendthrift. At all events, he suddenly felt a strange eagerness to become better acquainted with Miss Venn. He sought



her out, the next morning, among the groups under the magnolias. There could be no question that she was stupid. She had read nothing but her Bible and the stories in the newspapers, and had no opinions about either. But she confessed to ignorance of nothing, lying with the most placid, innocent smile.

“ ‘Hamlet?’ Oh, yes; I read that when it first came out. But those things slip through my mind like water through a sieve.”

To Robert, whose brain had long been rasped by Emma's prickly ideas, this dullness was as a downy bed of ease. Emma was perpetually struggling after progress with every power of her brain. It never occurred to Lucretia Venn to plan what she should do to-morrow, or at any future time. In Throop, too, there was much hard prejudice between the neighbors. To be clever was to have a sharp acerbity of wit; Emma's sarcasms cut like a thong.

But these people were born kind ; they were friendly to all the world, while in Lucretia there was a warm affluence of nature which made her the centre of all this warm, pleasant life. The old people called her by some pet name, the dogs followed her, the children climbed into her lap. Knight with her felt like a traveller who has been long lost on a bare, cold marsh and has come into a fire-lighted room.

One afternoon he received the card of M. José Tirar y Soult, who came to call upon him formally. The little fop was dazzling in white linen, diamond solitaires blazing on his breast and wrists.

"You go to ride?" he said, as the horses were brought round. "Lucretia, my child, you go to ride? It portends rain"—hopping to the edge of the gallery. "You will take cold!"

"There is not a cloud in the sky," said M. de Fourgon. "Come, Lucretia,

mount! José always fancies you on the edge of some calamity."

"It goes to storm," persisted Tirar. "You must wear a heavier habit, my little girl."

Miss Venn laughed, ran to her own room, and changed her habit.

"What way shall you ride?" José anxiously inquired of Knight.

"To the marshes."

"It is very dangerous there, sir. There are herds of wild cattle, and slippery ground"—fuming up and down the gallery. "Well, well! Tirar himself will go. I will not see the child's life in risk."

Knight was annoyed. "What relation does Monsieur Tirar hold to Miss Venn?" he asked his host, apart. "He assumes the control of a father over her."

"He is her cousin. He used to nurse the child on his knee, and he does not realize that she has grown to be a woman. Oh, yes, the poor little man loves her as

if she were his own child ! When their grandfather, Louis Soult, died, two years ago, he left all his estate to Lucretia, and not a dollar to José. It was brutal ! But José was delighted. 'A woman must have money, or she is cold in the world,' he said. 'But to shorn lambs, like me, every wind is tempered.' "

Mr. Knight was thoughtful during the first part of the ride. "I did not know," he said, presently, to young McCann, from St. Louis, a stranger like himself, "that Miss Venn was a wealthy woman."

"Oh, yes, the largest land-holder in this parish, and ten thousand a year, clear, besides."

Ten thousand a year ! And Emma drudging till midnight for two or three dollars a column ! Poor Emma ! A gush of unwonted tenderness filled his heart. The homely, faithful soul !

Ten thousand a year ! Knight would have been humiliated to think that this

money could change his feeling to the young woman who owned it. But it did change it. She was no longer only a dull, fascinating appeal to his imagination. She was a power ; something to be regarded with respect, like a Building Association or Pacific Railway stocks. But for some unexplained reason he carefully avoided her during the ride. Miss Venn was annoyed at this desertion, and showed it as a child would do. She beckoned him again and again to look at a heron's nest, or at the water-snakes darting through the ridges of the bayou, or at a family of chameleons who were keeping house on a prickly-pear. Finding that he did not stay at her side, she gave up her innocent wiles, at last, and rode on in silence. M. Tirar then flung himself headlong into the breach. He poured forth information about Louisiana for Knight's benefit, with his own flighty opinions tagged thereto. He told stories and laughed at them louder

than anybody else, his brown eyes dancing with fun ; but through all he kept a furtive watch upon Lucretia, to see the effect upon her.

They had now reached the marshes which lie along the Gulf. They were covered with a thin grass, which shone bright-emerald in the hot noon. The tide soaked the earth beneath, and drove back the narrow lagoons that were creeping seaward. A herd of raw-boned cattle wandered aimlessly over the spongy surface, doubtful whether the land was water, or the water, land. They staggered as they walked, from sheer weakness ; one steer fell exhausted, and as Lucretia's horse passed, it lifted its head feebly, looked at her with beseeching eyes, and dropped it again. A flock of buzzards in the distance scented their prey and began to swoop down out of the clear sky, flashes of black across the vivid green of the prairie, with lower and lower dips un-

til they alighted, quivering, on the dying beast and began to tear the flesh from its side.

José rode them down, yelling with rage. He came back jabbering in Spanish and looking gloomily over the vast, empty marsh. "I hate death anywhere, but this is wholesale murder! These wretched Cajans of the marsh raise larger herds than they can feed; they starve by the hundreds. That poor beast is dead—thanks be to God!" After a pause. "Well, well!" he cried, with a shrug, "your syndicate will soon convert this delta into solid ground, Mr. Knight; it is a noble work! Vast fortunes"—with a magniloquent sweep of his arm—"lie hidden under this mud."

"Why don't you take a share in the noble work, then?" asked McCann. "That is, if it would not interfere with your other occupations?"

"Me? I have no occupations! What

work should I do?" asked José, with a fillip of his pudgy fingers. Presently he galloped up to Miss Venn's side with an anxious face.

"Lucrezia, my child, has it occurred to you that you would like me better if I were doctor, or lawyer, or something?"

She looked at him, bewildered, but said nothing.

"It has not occurred to *me*," he went on, seriously. "I have three, four hundred dollars every year to buy my clothes. I have the Tirar jewelry. What more do I want? Everything I need comes to *mẽ*."

"Certainly, why not?" she answered, absently, her eyes wandering in search of something across the marsh.

"Then you do not mind?" he persisted, anxiously. "I wish my little girl to be pleased with old José. As for the rest of the world"—he cracked his thumb contemptuously.

Miss Venn smiled faintly. She had not even heard him. She was watching Knight, who had left the party and was riding homeward alone. José fancied there were tears in her eyes.

"Lucrezia!"

No answer.

"Lucrezia, do not worry! *I* am here."

"You! Oh, *Mon Dieu!* You are always here!" she broke forth, pettishly.

José gasped as if he had been struck, then he reined in his horse, falling back, while Mr. McCann gladly took his place.

M. Tirar, after that day, did not return to the plantation. Once he met M. de Fourgon somewhere in the parish, and with a sickly smile asked if Lucretia were in good health. "Remember, Jean," he added, earnestly, riding with him a little way, "*I* am that little girl's guardian. If she ever marry, it is José who must give her away. So ridiculous in her father to

make a foolish young fellow like me her guardian ! ”

“ Not at all ! No, indeed ! Very proper, Tirar,” said M. de Fourgon, politely, at which José’s face grew still paler and more grave.

One day he appeared about noon on the gallery. His shoes were muddy, his clothes the color of a bedraggled moth.

“ Ah, *mon enfant !* ” cried Madame Dessaix, kindly, from her chair in a shady corner. “ What is wrong ? No white costume this day, no diamonds, no laugh ? What is it, José ? ”

“ Nothing, madame,” said the little man drearily. “ I grow old. I dress no more as a young man. I accommodate myself to the age—the wrinkles.”

“ Wrinkles ? Bah ! Come and sit by me. For whom is it that you look ? ”

“ But—I thought I heard Lucrezia laugh as I rode up the levee ? ”

Madame Dessaix nodded significantly

and, putting her fingers on her lips, with all the delight that a Frenchwoman takes in lovers, led him, on tiptoe, to the end of the gallery and, drawing aside the vines, showed him Lucretia in a hammock under a gigantic pecan-tree. A mist of hanging green moss closed about her. She lay in it as a soft, white bird in a huge nest. Knight stood leaning against the trunk of the tree, looking down at her, his thin face intent and heated. He had spoken to her, but she did not answer. She smiled lazily, as she did when the children patted her on the cheek.

"*Voilà la petite!*" whispered Madame Dessaix, triumphantly. Then she glanced at M. Tirar, finding that he looked on in silence. He roused himself, with a queer noise in his throat.

"Yes, yes! Now—what does she answer him?"

"*Mère de Dieu!* What can she answer? He is young. He is a man who has his

own way. He will have no answer but the one! We consider the affair finished!"

Tirar made no comment. He turned and walked quickly down to the barnyard, where the children were, and stood among them and the cows for awhile. The stable-boys, used to jokes and picayunes from him, turned handsprings and sky-larked under his feet. Finding that he neither laughed nor swore at them, they began to watch him more narrowly, and noticed his shabby clothes with amazed contempt.

"Don José seek, ta-ta!" they whispered. "Don José, yo' no see mud on yo' clo'es?"

But he stood leaning over the fence, deaf and blind to them.

His tormentors tried another point of attack. "Don José no seek, but his mare seek. Poor Chiquita! She old horse now."

"It's a damned lie!" Tirar turned on the boy with such fury that he jumped back. "She's not old! Bring her out!"

The negroes tumbled over each other in their fright. The little white mare was led out. José patted her with trembling hands. Whatever great trouble had shaken him turned for the moment into this petty outlet.

"There is not such a horse in Attakapas!" he muttered to himself. "I am old, but she is young!" The mare whinnied with pleasure as he stroked her and mounted.

As he rode from the enclosure a clumsy bay horse was led out of the stable. Knight came down the levee to meet it. José scanned it with fierce contempt. "Ah, the low-born beast! And its master is no otherwise! But who can tell what shall please the little girl?"

But Tirar could not shut his eyes to the fact that the figure on the heavy horse was

manly and fine. The courage in his heart was at its lowest ebb.

"José is old and fat—fat. That is a young fellow—he is like a man!" His chin quivered like a hysteric woman's. The next minute he threw himself on the mare's neck.

"I have only you now, Chiquita! Nobody but you!"

She threw back her ears and skimmed across the prairie with the hoof of a deer. When he passed Knight, M. Tirar saluted him with profound courtesy.

"Funny little man," said Robert to McCann, who had joined him. "You might call him a note of exaggeration in the world. But that is a fine horse that he rides."

"Yes; a famous racer in her day, they tell me. Tirar talks of her as if she were a blood-relation. I wish we had horses of her build just now. That brute of yours sinks in the mud with every step."

“ It is deeper than usual to-day. I don't understand it. We have had no rain.”

They separated in a few minutes, Knight taking his way to the sea-marshes.

The marshes were always silent, but there was a singular, deep stillness upon them to-day. The sun was hidden by low-hanging mists, but it turned them into tent-like veils of soft, silvery brilliance. The colors and even the scents of the marshes were oddly intensified beneath them; the air held the strong smells of the grass and roses motionless; the lagoons, usually chocolate-colored, were inky black between their fringes of yellow and purple flags; the countless circular pools of clear water seemed to have increased in number, and leaped and bubbled as if alive.

If poor Emma could but turn her eyes from the barren fields of Throop to this strange, enchanted plain!

He checked himself. What right had he to wish for Emma? Lucretia—

But Lucretia would see nothing in it but mud and weeds !

Lucretia was a dear soul ; but after all, he thought, with a laugh, her best qualities were those of an amiable cow. That very day he had brought himself to make love to her with as much force as his brain could put into the words, and she had listened with the amused, pleased, ox-like stare of one of these cattle when its sides were tickled by the long grass. She had given him no definite answer.

Knight ploughed his way through the spongy prairie, therefore, in a surly ill-humor, which the unusual depth of mud did not make more amiable. He was forced to ride into the bayoux every few minutes to wash the clammy lumps from the legs of his horse.

Where M. Tirar went that day, he himself, when afternoon came, could not have told distinctly. He had a vague remembrance that he had stopped at one or two

Acadian farm-houses for no purpose whatever. He was not a drinking man, and had tasted nothing but water all day, yet his brain was stunned and bruised, as if he was rousing from a long debauch. When he came to himself he was on the lower marshes. Chiquita had suddenly stopped, planted her legs apart like a mule, and refused to budge an inch farther. What ailed this bayou? It, too, had come to a halt, and had swollen into a stagnant black pond.

José was altogether awake now. He understood what had happened. A heavy spring tide in the Gulf had barred all outlet for the bayous, which cut through the marshes. The great river, for which they were but mouths, was already forcing its way over their banks and oozing through all the spongy soil. There was no immediate danger of his drowning; but unless he made instant escape, there was a certainty that he would be held and sucked

into the vast and rapidly spreading quicksands of mud until he did drown.

If Chiquita—— ?

He wheeled her head to the land and called to her. She began to move with extreme caution, testing each step, now and then leaping to a hummock of solid earth. Twice she stopped and changed her course. José dismounted several times and tried to lead her. But he soon was bogged knee-deep. He saw that the instinct of the horse was safer than his judgment, and at last sat quietly in the saddle. At ordinary times he would have sworn and scolded, and, perhaps, being alone, have shed tears, for José was at heart a coward and dearly loved his life.

But to-day it was low tide in the little man's heart. The bulk of life had gone from him with Lucretia. His love for her had given him dignity in his own eyes ; without her he was a poor buffoon, who

carried his jokes from house to house in payment for alms.

He did what he could, however, to save his life, rationally enough—threw off his heavy boots, and the Spanish saddle, to lighten the load on the mare, patted her, sang and laughed to cheer her. Once, when the outlook was desperate, he jumped off. “She shall not die!” he said, fiercely. He tried to drive her away, but she stood still, gazing at him wistfully.

“Aha!” shouted José, delighted, nodding to some invisible looker-on. “Do you see that? *She* will not forsake me! So, my darling! You and Tirar will keep together to the last.” He mounted again.

Chiquita, after that, made slow but steady progress. She reached a higher plateau. Even there the pools were rapidly widening; the oozing water began to shine between the blades of grass. In

less than an hour this level also would be in the sea.

But in less than an hour Chiquita would have brought him to dry ground.

José talked to her incessantly now, in Spanish, arguing as to this course or that.

"Ha! What is that?" he cried, pulling her up. "That black lump by the bayou? A man—no! A horse and man! They are sinking—held fast!"

He was silent a moment, panting with excitement. Then—"It is Knight!" he cried. "Caught like a rat in a trap! He will die—thanks be to God!"

If Knight were dead, Lucretia would be his own little girl again.

The thought was the flash of a moment. Knight's back was toward him. José, unseen, waited irresolute.

After the first murderous triumph he hoped Robert could be saved. Tirar was a coward, but at bottom he was a man—how much of a man remained to be

proved. The longer he looked at the engineer the more he hated him, with a blind, childish fury.

"But I am not murderer—I!" he said to himself, mechanically, again and again.

Chiquita pawed, impatient to be off. The water was rising about her hoofs. It sparkled now everywhere below the reeds. Death was waiting for both the men—a still, silent, certain death—the more horrible because there was no fury or darkness in it. The silvery mist still shut the world in, like the walls of a tent; the purple and yellow flags shone in the quiet light.

Chiquita could save one, and but one.

The Tirars and Soult had been men of courage and honor for generations. Their blood was quickening in his fat little body.

A thought struck him like a stab from a knife. "If Knight dies, it will break her heart. But me!" Then he cracked

his thumb contemptuously. "What does she care for poor old José?"

We will not ask what passed in his heart during the next ten minutes.

He and his God were alone together.

He came up to Knight and tapped him on the shoulder. "Hello! What's wrong?"

"I'm bogged. This brute of a horse is sinking in the infernal mud."

"Don't jerk at him! I'll change horses with you, if you are in a hurry to reach the plantation. Chiquita can take you more quickly than he."

"But you?—I don't understand you. What will you do?"

"I am in no hurry."

"This horse will not carry you. It seems to me that the mud is growing deeper."

"I understand the horses and mud of our marshes better than you. Come, take Chiquita. Go!"

Knight alighted and mounted the mare,

with a perplexed face. He had begun to think himself in actual danger, and was mortified to find that José made so light of the affair.

"Well, good-day, Monsieur Tirar!" he said. "It is very kind in you to take that confounded beast off my hands. I'll sell him to-morrow if I can." He nodded to José, and jerked the bridle sharply. "Come, get up!" he said, touching Chiquita with a whip.

José leaped at him like a cat. "Damnation! Don't dare to touch her!"—wrenching the whip from his hand, and raising it to strike him. "Pardon, sir," stiffening himself, "my horse will not bear a stroke. Do not speak to her and she will carry you safely." His hand rested a moment on the mare's neck. He muttered something to her in Spanish, and then he turned his back that he might not see her go away.

Mr. Knight reached the upper marshes

in about two hours. He caught sight of a boat going down the bayou, and recognizing M. de Fourgon and some other men from the plantation in it, rode down to meet them.

"Thank God, you are safe, Knight!" exclaimed M. de Fourgon. "How's that? Surely that is Chiquita you are riding! Where did you find her?"

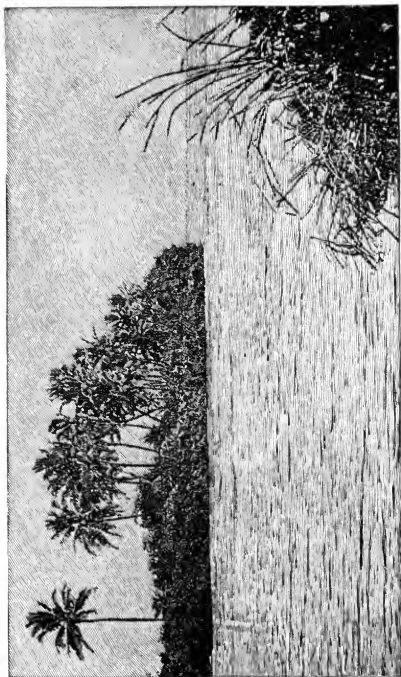
"That queer little Mexican insisted that I should swap horses with him. My nag was bogged, and——"

The men looked at each other.

"Where did you leave him?"

"In the sea-marsh, near the mouth of this bayou. Why, what do you mean? Is he in danger? Stop!" he shouted, as they pulled away without a word. "For God's sake, let me go with you!" He left Chiquita on the bank and leaped into the boat, taking an oar.

"You do not mean that Tirar has risked his life for mine?" he said.



"It looks like it," McCann replied. "And yet I could have sworn that he disliked you, especially."

"The old Tirar blood has not perished from off the earth," said M. de Fourgon, in a low voice. "Give way! Together now! I fear we are too late."

The whole marsh was under water before they reached it. They found José's body submerged, but wedged in the crotch of a pecan-tree, into which he had climbed. It fell like a stone into the boat.

M. de Fourgon laid his ear to his heart, pressed his chest, and rose, replying by a shake of the head to their looks. He took up his oar and rowed in silence for a few minutes.

"Pull, gentlemen!" he said, hoarsely. "The night is almost upon us. We will take him to my house."

But Knight did not believe that José was dead. He stripped him, and rubbed and chafed the sodden body in the bottom

of the boat. When they reached the house and, after hours of vain effort, even the physician gave up, Knight would not listen to him.

"He shall not die, I tell you! Why should his life be given for mine? I did not even thank him, brute that I am!"

It was but a few minutes after that, that he looked up from his rubbing, his face growing suddenly white. The doctor put his hand on Tirar's breast. "It beats!" he cried, excitedly. "Stand back! Air—brandy!"

At last José opened his eyes, and his lips moved. "What is it, my dear fellow?" they all cried, crowding around him. But only Knight caught the whisper. He stood up, an amazed comprehension in his eyes.

Drawing M. de Fourgon aside, he said: "I understand now! I see why he did it!" and hurried away abruptly, in search of Miss Venn.

The next morning M. Tirar was carried out in a steamer-chair to the gallery.

He was the hero of the day. The whole household, from Madame Dessaix to the black pickaninnies, buzzed about him. Miss Venn came down the gallery, beaming, flushed, her eyes soft with tears. She motioned them all aside and sat down by him, stroking his cold hand in her warm ones.

"It is me that you want, José? Not these others? Only me?"

"If you can spare for me a little time, Lucrezia?" he said, humbly.

She did not reply for so long that he turned and looked into her face.

"A little time? *All* of the time," she whispered.

José started forward. His chilled heart had scarcely seemed to beat since he was taken from the water. Now it sent the blood hot through his body.

"What do you mean, child?" he said,

sternly. "Think what you say. It is old José. Do you mean——?"

"Yes; and I always meant it," she said, quietly. "Why, there are only us left—you and me. And Chiquita," she added, laughing.

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A week later Mrs. Knight received a letter from Robert, with the story of his rescue. She cried over it a good deal.

"Though I don't see why he thinks it such an extraordinary thing in that little man to do!" she reflected. "Anybody would wish to save Robert, even a wild Mexican. And, why upon earth, because his life was in danger, he should have written to offer it to Emma Cramer, passes me! She hasn't a dollar."

Through the window she saw the girl crossing the fields, with quick, light steps.

"She's heard from him! She's coming to tell me. Well, I did think Robert

would have married well, having his pick and choice——”

But the widow's heart had been deeply moved. “Poor Emma! She's been as faithful as a dog to Robert. If she has no money, she will save his as an heiress would not have done. Providence orders all things right,” she thought, relenting. “If that girl has not put on her best white dress on a week-day! How glad she must be! I'll go and meet her, I guess. She has no mother now, to kiss her, or say God bless her, poor child!” and she hurried to the gate.



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